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ISSUE 09 APRIL '98

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SEE PAGE 16



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*The terrifying sequel
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BLACK PLAYSTATION

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POCKET PLAYSTATION

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Vs., Bushido Blade 2,
Bust A Move 3,
and more!*

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*Armoured Core
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Bloody Roar
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Red Alert
Bounce II (Yaroze demo)*



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CoolBoarders 2



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Mr Skull sez: Hudson's Bomberman has been on the Megadrive, SNES, Saturn, PC, N64 and now PlayStation. But what was the first system he appeared on? Answers on the back of a postcard to the usual address. Last month's answer was Fuchikoma Attack Pods and S. Montgomery gets the goodies!



ISSUE 9 APRIL '98

So, you got a PlayStation for Christmas. You've played all the demo CDs you could get your hands on, hired Final Fantasy from the video shop for the sixth time, and even finished that stinky game Aunt Ethel bought you as a present ("Now Sonny, I know you like games, so I bought you a copy of Monopoly for your new PlayStation.") So, what next?

The big game that everyone's been waiting ages for is Resident Evil 2. It's been a while since the first title set the gaming world on fire with its unprecedented success in combining a good horror story with an enjoyable game. The sequel is upon us at last and, unlike the case when it comes to film sequels, Resident Evil 2 succeeds in making the first game look like a fairy tale. The plot, the characters and, of course, the zombies, all fit in together perfectly. The result is one of the most gripping games you'll ever play.

Speaking of gripping things, you'll be pleased to hear that Sony has decided to release a new version of the analog controller. Unlike the existing analog pad, which is no longer available, the new Dual Shock as it's known will feature a shaking mechanism. Those who've used the Dual Shock have reported that it has a stronger, yet more subtle and effective vibration than the N64 rumble pack does, and Sony has indicated that most new games in production will be designed to take full advantage of it.

Finally, make sure you check out our feature on Yaroze games. These are games that dedicated hobbyists have made themselves at home. Although most of these titles pale in comparison to the games you can buy in the shops, they serve as an example of what's possible with a little effort. Scoff at their poor appearance if you will, but don't forget that they are their creator's first steps towards making the games you may well be playing in the years to come.

Well, that's it from me. Class is dismissed, you can now go and frolic in the playground that is The Official Australian PlayStation Magazine.

- Andrew



resident evil 2



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Get ready for playable demos of Armoured Core, Bloody Roar, Cool Boarders 2, C&C: Red Alert, more Yaroze madness with Bouncer 2 plus a video of the exceptional Bushido Blade. And because you demanded it - we've included the controls for each game.

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THE BLACK PLAYSTATION

After 18 months in developers' hands, the black PlayStation is starting to show what can be done. We take a look at some titles from Europe and Japan

This month we've got a special sneak preview of *Armoured Core*, the futuristic mech battle game that puts you in the hot seat! If you like the demo here, start saving up as the full game will be released in June. *Cool Boarders 2* is back for an encore appearance on our demo CD, and this time you can play it! *Bloody Roar* is a top notch beat 'em up from the arcades that has fighters who can change from their human form into beasts. *Red Alert* is the classic real time strategy game that took the PC world by storm. Now PlayStation owners can see what the fuss is about. Our ongoing series of Yaroze demos brings us the curious *Bouncer II*, and to round things out we've got a rolling demo of *Bushido Blade*, the most innovative one-on-one fighting game the world has seen. Enjoy!



Bushido Blade

ROLLING DEMO

PUBLISHER:

Sony Computer Entertainment

RELEASE:

Available now

This is it. This is the game that is going to change the way we view 3D fighters. No power bars, no ridiculous special moves, just honest to goodness realistic and accurate action - including the one hit kill. Add to this such goodies as Slash mode (100 assassins line up for you to kill them), the linkable first person POV (only your arms and weapon visible to you) and story mode (which requires you to fight in the true spirit of the Bushido code).

The smooth and stylish graphics and awe-inspiring characters make this one of the hottest games around. Check out our video demo to see what we mean.



Armoured Core

PLAYABLE DEMO

PUBLISHER:

From Software

RELEASE:

June 1998

Strap yourself in to your *Armoured Core* battle mech and prepare to engage the enemy! There's something so satisfying about a fight when you're surrounded by 2 tonnes of fast-moving, flight-capable, well armoured and even better armed metal.

Armoured Core is one of the best mech games to come out in a while, carefully combining simulation and action elements, all with an on-going storyline and mission based adventures. It's damn hot, and it's here for your enjoyment.

- L1 strafe left
- L2 look up
- R1 strafe right
- R2 look down
- Up move forward
- Down move down
- Left move left
- Right move right
- △ select weapon
- shoot
- ×
- jump (hold to fly)
- power attack



DISC PROBLEMS!

If your demo CD doesn't work, please check the following possible causes before returning it. If all else fails, send the broken or suspect CD to PlayStation CD Returns, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016, along with a description of the problem and your return address.

We will replace the CD, however, we have experienced delays in obtaining sufficient quantities of returns for some issues. If you are still waiting, please be patient!

- You are putting it in a PlayStation, right? We have had bewildered PC owners sending us irate e-mails about Windows crashing (again)
- If the disc appears undamaged but

doesn't work, please make sure the CD has been cleaned properly (wipe from the centre out with a clean, soft cloth. Not your grubby t-shirt!), or try a CD cleaner from an audio shop. If your PlayStation is not working, we suggest you contact the place you bought it from or call Sony's customer support line on (02) 9878 0533.

Bloody Roar

PLAYABLE DEMO

PUBLISHER:

Hudson

RELEASE:

Available now

Unleash the beast within and say hello to your animal instincts. Bloody Roar takes the classical 3D fighter one step further and gives you a Beast Form option - a half-human, half-animal, lycanthropic battle mode that gives you a whole new set of moves to use.

The full game has a big selection of characters (including a mole man and a cute bunny rabbit) all rendered with good chunky 3D graphics and battle arenas to match. See for yourself with our hot demo.

Bloody Roar was reviewed in Issue 6 and received 7 out of 10

L1	not used
L2	not used
R1	not used
R2	cancel
Up	jump up
Down	crouch down
Left	move left
Right	move right
△	activates RAVE mode
□	punch
×	kick
○	activates BEAST mode



C&C: Red Alert

PLAYABLE DEMO

PUBLISHER:

Virgin Interactive

RELEASE:

Available now

The first C&C conversion was greeted with mixed reactions. It just didn't seem to make the most of the PSX. This time around Westwood have shown us what they're made of with the most excellent C&C: Red Alert.

Set in a future where Hitler never came to power, you get to control the newly hot Cold War. Play as NATO or the USSR and take command of your armies to discover the new world power!

C&C: Red Alert was reviewed in issue 7 and received 8 out of 10

L1	move cursor faster
L2	not used
R1	not used
R2	not used
Up	move cursor up
Down	move cursor down
Left	move cursor left
Right	move cursor right
△	brings up inventory
□	change cursor
×	hold to select window
○	deselects characters



Cool Boarders 2

PLAYABLE DEMO

PUBLISHER:

UEP Systems

RELEASE:

Available now

Here it is, the coolest PlayStation game around! Cool Boarders 2 follows on from the original hit, with more tracks (16 hidden courses in the full game) and more tricks and stunts to pull off.

Last issue we were cruel and just tempted you with a rolling video demo of Cool Boarders 2. This time we've decided to play fair and let you taste the action for yourselves. Be prepared for realistic snow boarding action, all performed with some of the slickest graphics in a sports simulation. It's addictive and very, very cool.

Cool Boarders 2 was reviewed in our February issue and rated 7 out of 10

L1	board facing backward (tricks)
L2	board facing forward (tricks)
R1	tricks
R2	tricks
Up	gain speed
Down	crouch (hold to jump)
Left	move left
Right	move right
△	change view
□	tricks
×	tricks
○	tricks



Bouncer II (Yaroze demo)

PLAYABLE DEMO

PUBLISHER:

Yaroze

RELEASE:

Available now

The black Yaroze PlayStation allows you to make your own games at home - all you need is a little experience in programming C language. Here's an example of what can be done with a little time and effort. It may not look as nice as the games you can buy, but that's not the point. The Yaroze is designed to encourage budding gamers to learn more about making games, and you can read about more examples in our feature on page 26.

L1	not used
L2	not used
R1	not used
R2	special
Up	not used
Down	not used
Left	move platform left
Right	move platform right
△	launch
□	not used
×	switch platform
○	not used



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The Pocket PlayStation

It's not often that we at PlayStation Magazine find ourselves puzzled about PlayStation developments, but the latest word from Sony has us both curious and very excited!

It seems that Sony has been working on a new portable PlayStation compatible game device. This device, pictured here in early prototype form, will feature a black and white LCD screen, its own powerful processor and memory, control buttons and some sound capability. Most interestingly, it will be able to dock into the memory card slot of your PlayStation. Once it's joined to the mothership of the PSX, users will be able to download games or parts of games from black PlayStation discs, with no separate software medium required to do this.

Among this nameless gadget's many uses will be the ability for two device owners to play wireless games with each other using a funky in-built two-way infrared capability. Talk about a contraption making a boring lunch-time fun (not to mention breakfast and dinner, as well as turning five minute coffee breaks into half hour battle zones)! It will also have calendar and clock/watch capabilities like those old "game and watch" toys. There is no set date for release, nor are there any details (price, name, etc) known at this point, but it is expected to be very affordable to allow mass market penetration.

There you have it - first news of the mysterious device we've called the Pocket PlayStation. We'll keep you informed as it develops.



The newly announced pocket-sized PlayStation has the potential to cause massive disruption to our education system as we know it

Shocking News!

Sony's recently released Analog Controller hasn't had a good time in its short life. First it was released outside of Japan without the 'shaking' feature. Then it was hyped up for *V-Rally*, only to be removed from the game at the 11th hour. Now its fate has been sealed, as you won't be seeing it on sale any more.

The bad news is that Sony has ceased production. Why? Well that's the good news - the Dual Shock Pad is coming to Australia. The Dual Shock will replace it and features an improved shaking mechanism that will make it to our shores.

Oh yes, imagine the sheer pleasure when you grasp the Dual Shock. Hold it like a lover, firm yet gentle. Feel it move in your hands, vibrating and shaking in

response to your game and the way you play. Feel it shaking hard, or moving softly. Spank it... erm. I, err, I mean, that the Dual Shock can vibrate on either side of the pad rather than just shaking the whole pad like some rumbling controllers. All that adds up to the best shaking controller on the market. And to make it even better - it's analogue. Joy!

The Dual Shock will be released in May to coincide with the release of *Gran Turismo*, and the word from Sony is that it will also be compatible with the forthcoming *Tekken 3*.



Sony's new Dual Shock analog pad replaces the discontinued analog controller, and will be compatible with *Gran Turismo*. Both the game and the pad will be released in May.



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Immerse yourself in 19th Century London - the feeding ground of over 24 horrific monsters including zombies, werewolves, banshees, and demons. Varied gameplay and an armory of hand-to-hand combat moves makes this game the nightmare you've always dreamed of.

Use an analog controller for maximum 3D effect.

NIGHTMARE

CREATURES

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Tekken 3 News

The next installation in Namco's cult fighter series has just been released in Japan, with a US release due at the end of the month. The Australian release date has still to be confirmed, though a June or July street date is looking quite likely. Full details of the Australian/European game are also yet to be announced, though we're hoping Namco will take the time to make sure it runs full-screen and full-speed on PAL machines.

In other *Tekken 3* news, it has been revealed that the game will be compatible with the forthcoming Dual Shock Analog Pad. We'll be taking a further look at the Japanese game next month.

Namco's arcade fighter *Tekken 3* will be out on the PSX sometime in the next couple of months...



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officially swit

APRIL 1998



Tomb Raider 2

Sequel Mania! Gran Turismo 2

When a game is successful as these titles have been, you can be sure it's got a sequel in pipeline. Here's the dirt on what Santa might be stuffing down your stocking next Christmas.

Tomb Raider 3

According to Eidos leaks, the company is currently developing another *Tomb Raider* game tentatively named, 'The Adventures of Lara Croft.' Presumably, the new *Tomb Raider* will take place after the ending of *Tomb Raider II*, although nothing has been confirmed yet.

When the media spoke with Eidos to confirm the rumour, the representatives sounded very surprised: "I don't know how you found out about that," sputtered one rep, "but we can't confirm that at this time."

It's scary but true: work has already begun on a sequel to the ground breaking racer *Gran Turismo*, before the first game has even been released here! The developers are overhauling the physics engine with the intent of making the game's handling and physics even more realistic than before (how, we ask? How?!). In addition to this startling news, it appears that Sony is looking into what new cars *Gran Turismo II* should have.

Considering the sheer amount of cool cars in the first (147 for the Japanese game, close to 300 for the PAL version), it'll be interesting to see what it comes up with for number two.

Gran Turismo II should be released in Japan by the end of this year, with a US release to most likely follow in early 1999. No news on a PAL release at this moment, but you can be sure it's on the cards.

Colony Wars: Vendetta

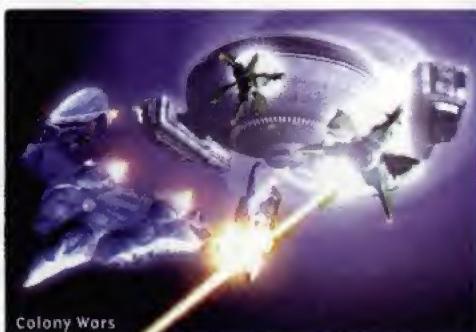
It was only a short time ago that Psygnosis unleashed *Colony Wars* on an unsuspecting public. The game impressed critics and gamers alike and was the first truly involving space epic for the PlayStation. With many people still hard at work completing the original, we were surprised when Psygnosis leaked that it is hard at work on a sequel.

Entitled *Colony Wars: Vendetta*, Psygnosis promises the sequel will be bigger and better in every way, with an enhanced graphics engine, heaps of new weapons and ships, multiple endings and two new solar systems in addition to the three from the first game. There will also be the option to take on different objectives in each mission, and the whole game will have a more cohesive story behind it with a varied and interesting cast of characters to interact with. This certainly sounds like a worthwhile sequel and we'll be pestering Psygnosis for some sort of preview version to take a more in-depth look at.



Tomb Raider 2

If it's a big game, you can be sure there's going to be a sequel released by next Christmas. Ask Santa for *Tomb Raider 3*, *Colony Wars 2* and another *Gran Turismo*.



Colony Wars



Gran Turismo

s been
ched on.



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APRIL 1998

Balls of Steel

Back when I was a lad, we'd hit a shiny metal ball around while waiting for the hamburgers to fry at the local take away. These days kids are spoiled, with home delivered pizza and fancy 'TV games' to keep them entertained. Those with a hankering for some old school gaming may be interested in *Pro Pinball: Time Shock*, the latest pinny game for the PlayStation.

When this game landed on our desks we weren't quite sure what to make of it. Of course, we were no strangers to pinball machine simulations, but we had never seen a title that only had one table. However, it didn't take much playing for us to realise that we were dealing with no ordinary pinball game. This is THE most realistic pinball simulation in the world! (And we don't say that lightly).

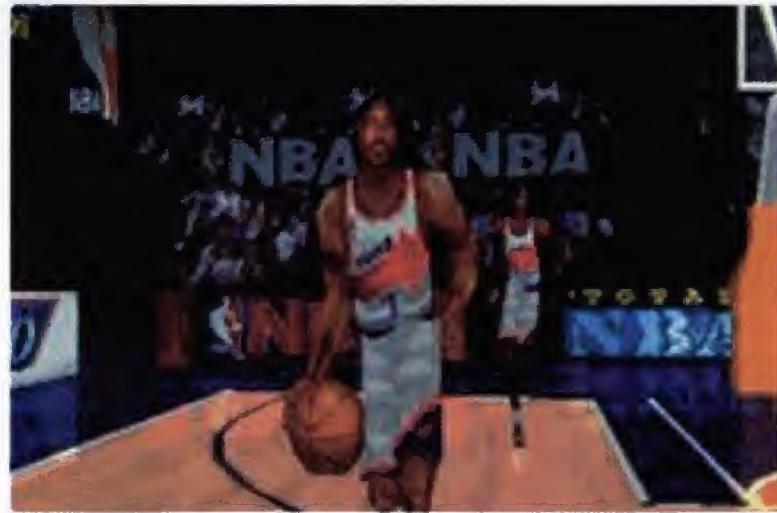
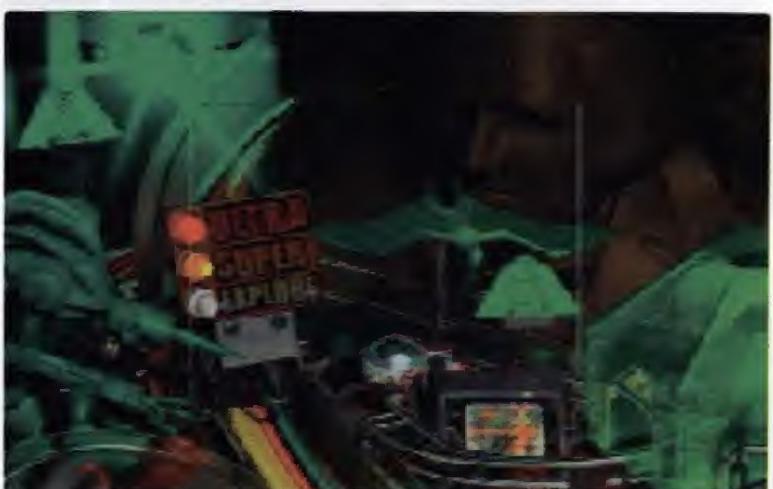
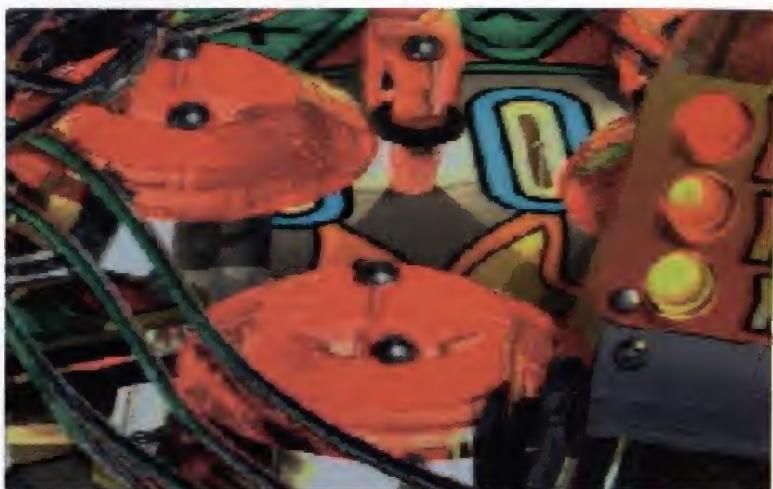
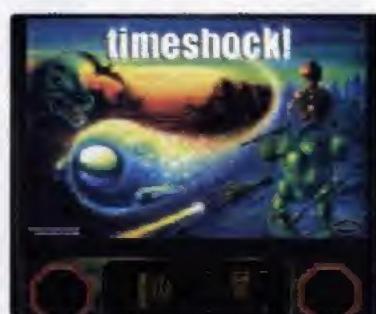
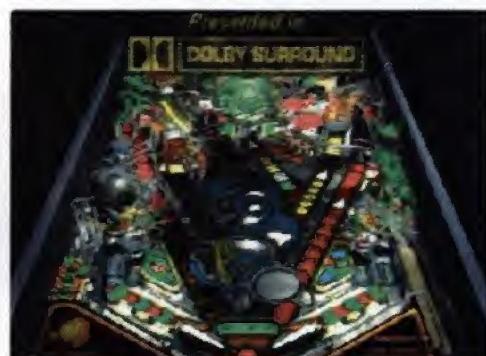
Pro Pinball: Time Shock emulates a contemporary pinball machine, complete with LED video screen and video modes. Not only are the physics entirely accurate and the graphics perfect, but the table is intricately designed. To prove this, Empire Interactive have supplied an option that allows you to explore the surface of the table at extreme close-up. It's reassuring to know just how much work has gone into the whole thing.

Even better, you can modify the

game and its related options, adding features as well as physically changing the pinball table itself.

Pinball sims are not everyone's bag, but if you like them, you can do a lot worse than this one. *Time Shock* is out now and is distributed by Metro Games.

Time Shock is the perfect pinball simulation in every respect. Except for the spilt milkshakes and chiko rolls on the glass top



Total NBA Challenge

The NBA has joined forces with Sony to bring you the "Total NBA Challenge" at this year's Royal Easter Show in Sydney. If you think you're a top shot at Sony's *Total NBA 97*, come down to the show and prove your skills against all-comers. The competition will

run from April 3 to 18, with daily winners invited to compete in the Championship Series for honour, glory and some great NBA stuff including advance copies of *Total NBA '98!* Entry to the competition is free, so if you're at the show come down and sign up at the NBA Arena stand between 9:00am and 12:00 noon each day.

PaRappa Parties Down!

Sony threw a New Year's party in Tokyo for *PaRappa the Rappa* to celebrate its sales of over one million copies. *PaRappa*'s creator, Masaya Matsuura, was on hand to host the event, which was attended by a number of lucky fans chosen from a competition to send in drawings of the famous rappin' pooch. Mr. Matsuura thanked the guests for helping *PaRappa* achieve its success and announced that *PaRappa 2* is already in development.



APRIL 1998



Freaky Fighter Fun

It seems that Capcom has done it again. It's got a brand new arcade 3D fighter out: *Rival Schools United by Fate* (alternately titled *Hall of Justice*). It's a polygon based 3D fighter with a horde of new characters all from different schools in Japan. The moves and gameplay is just like in the familiar *Street Fighter* games, with a hand-full of combos just waiting to be unveiled as you play.

With a roster of 14 characters ranging



from athletes to scientists, school wardens to punks, and the gratuitous (but still dammably cute) sailorsuit school-girl, the characters are all hip and very cool.

Capcom took the team play concept from *X-Men Vs. Street Fighter* and added a little extra bonus - the team up technique. Press kick and punch together at the right time and you and your partner will team up to beat the hell out of your opponent.

Aside from this new feature, the most impressive new abilities of this game are the camera angles. The camera spins around and up when the characters engage in team-ups, or zooms in for combos. The use of sparks, lens

flares, and revolving 3D camera movement all result in a cinematic experience that heightens the fighting experience like never before in a Capcom fighter.

There is no official word on when *Rival Schools* will appear, but the rumour seems to be that you should look out for it by the end of this year.



Carmageddon outta here

Interplay has announced that it will finally be bringing its socially obnoxious PC racer *Carmageddon* to the PlayStation. *Carmageddon* has garnered some controversy, mainly for the way it enables you to kill pedestrians for points during races. Although the company couldn't comment on the changes that will be made in the PlayStation version, it did manage to leak out that it will be releasing the game later this year.



Bomberman's Back!

One of the coolest multi-player games on the SNES and Megadrive was *Bomberman*. Fiendishly simple, the objective was to run around a maze dropping bombs in each other's path. Now Hudson's classic has made it to the PlayStation and it's just as good as ever!

In one player mode you have to blast your way through a maze complete with obstacles and enemies. Once you collect all the crystals in a certain maze you can move on, progressing this way until you encounter a boss. It's kooky and fun and has bombs in it - what more could you ask for?

It's the four-player battle mode, however, that makes this game so popular, and this latest incarnation is compatible with the Multi-tap. *Bomberman World*, as it's called this time around, has recently been released in Japan and is due to

make its way over here in June. More details next issue.



Standing Ovation

We've seen a couple of steering wheel stands come through the office in our time. Not many, but enough to let us know that there is some interest in them out there.

The latest to grace our presence is the Racer's Edge and we have to say this little number looks damn good. This contraption fits over your legs and knees. The wheel straps on to the top, meaning the Racer's Edge can fit almost any wheel accessory. There's a pedal shelf underneath, it's adjustable for height, the whole thing collapses neatly to fit under a bed and the plastic frame means that you don't need a weightlifter to shift it (even our weedy little deputy managed to lift it!). It's

certainly the best looking of the wheel frames that we've seen.

Although details have yet to be finalised, creator Dean Richardson says that the whole unit should retail for less than the price of a PlayStation. Keep an eye out for it, coming soon to a store near you and we'll have a full report once we get our hands on the final version and keep you posted on other future developments from Racer's Edge.

The Racer's Edge steering wheel and pedal stand (seen here in pre-production prototype form - the styling will change for the final model) gives you total stability and is easy to pack up and store



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Front Mission Alternative

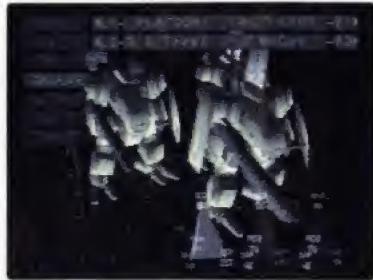
PUBLISHER: SQUARESOFT

RELEASE: TBA

Front Mission Alternative is set across war-torn Africa, where a multitude of heavily armed factions are locked in a power struggle. Placed in command of a platoon of mecha units known as Wandrun Wagens (WAWs), you must instruct them to carry out a variety of missions to suppress enemy units in different environments. These can range from sprawling desert plains, seaside areas and densely packed cities, to the claustrophobic confines of a warehouse. Unlike Square's previous turn-based *Front Mission* games, *FMA* is a polygon based real time strategy simulation in that feels a bit like *Armoured Core* crossed with *Command & Conquer*, though there's none of the anal resource management of the latter.

Platoons are made up of three WAWs that you can equip with a variety of offensive and defensive hardware. Their mobility, attack and defense learning levels can be set, as well as camouflage to suit the mission terrain as described during the briefing. A rotatable and zoomable 3D map screen is used to plot the platoon's path to the enemies; then you let them rock and roll! As they go into battle, the action is viewed via a rotatable camera around the platoon; it's like watching a live video feed back at HQ. To really get into the action when your units start exchanging missiles with the enemy (it's full-on folks!), you can opt for cockpit camera mode of the leader WAW. During the mission, the team's behaviour can be set to offensive or defensive mode (when you don't want

them to attack just yet) and they can be commanded to initiate dispersed or concentrated attack patterns. The action is displayed - or should we say relayed - in jaw dropping splendour. But



Front Mission Alternative has huge mechs and great graphics to give you a realistic battle game. Although, we're still confused about the Wargasm bit

don't just sit there and gape, you must constantly refer back to the map screen to re-plot the platoon's advance or tell them to attack enemies that have snuck up behind!

As the game progresses, more powerful mecha and hardware become available as well as two more platoons. Needless to say, going into battle with another two groups under your command makes things even more fun and intense! Battles become a craze of switching camera views between the three units, constant monitoring of everyone's damage and changing directives as necessary. Strategic thinking really pays off; there's nothing like a sure fire victory as enemies are caught in a pincer attack! The choice of weaponry to arm the platoons in some missions is vital to



victory, but for those who find the setup a little tedious there is a default setup mode. This arms the platoon as a full on assault group, support group or a mix of both. There's also a bit of a background story conveyed through

brief cut scenes and banter between the WAW pilots during the missions. *Front Mission Alternative* adds another dimension to the mecha combat game and we love it; lets hope an English conversion is coming soon!





Einhander

RELEASE DATE: TBA

DEVELOPER: SQUARESOFT

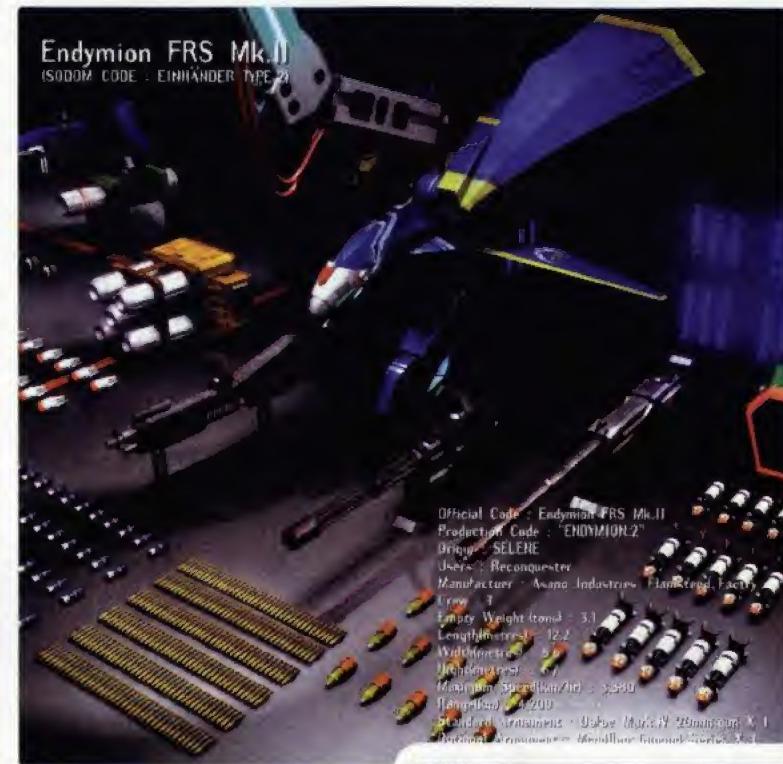
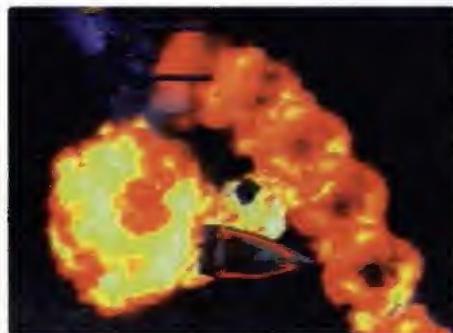
E according to a German friend, *Einhander* translates as 'a person with one hand'. It's also the name of the strangely shaped fighter you pilot in Square's first foray into the side scrolling shooter. Trust us: you'll definitely need both hands and sharp reflexes to blast your way through this game!

Einhander's graphics have made the transition from the genre's sprite based ancestors into polygons and the results are spectacular. The overall presentation - from the intro to graphics - are beautifully executed, giving the current crown holder Raystorm a run for its money. The intense gameplay will deplete your body's adrenalin supply in a nanosecond; masses of enemy ships swoop in towards your 'firing line' from the background as well as from the sides and top of the screen; camera angles shift between sections to enhance the 3D effect and the end of level bosses will make your jaw drop!

Besides its default weapon, the *Einhander* craft is equipped with a grappling arm which enables it to pick up weapons left by enemies. These can range



from chain guns, cannons and missile launchers to an awesome lightsabre-esque blade beam that cuts through everything in its path! Depending on what kind of craft you select (from a choice of three),

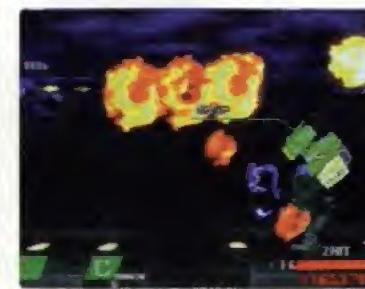


With awesome 3D effects, intense gameplay, and the sort of action that made computer games popular, *Einhander* gives us hope that shooting action is not totally out of style.

one or two additional weapons can be picked up simultaneously. When their ammo runs out, simply pick off another foe and grab their arsenal as they explode. A unique feature is that these weapons' mounted positions can be switched between the fighter's underbelly and back, sometimes giving a different effect

depending on where it's mounted.

Einhander is truly a knuckle shredder in the best sense of the word. Even if you think you're over the whole shooting game deal, we bet that a few minutes playing this will have you reconverted. Here's hoping for a local release soon!



Bushido Blade 2

The killer sequel to one of the most unexpected and refreshingly original fighting games has been announced, leaving fans of the original and fighting game purists salivating in anticipation.

The basic concept of the first *Bushido Blade*, a fighting game in which there are no life bars and characters can be killed with one hit, will be retained for the second game. However, the attacking and defending methods will be changed and refined. Looking at the way *Bushido Blade 2* is shaping up, this will not be just another boring sequel!

It will possess 14 selectable characters in all, with battles taking place over as many as 10 separate stages. These include a variety of traditional and modern day settings, such as terraced fields, train stations, ferry passes and parking lots. One of the interesting new features of *Bushido Blade 2* is that there will also be supporting characters whom you must defeat to progress. Each clan has two or three leaders, such as Mikado or Gengoro, and each leader has two supporting characters who will usually act as a bodyguards. They may help you in a fight, and if the leader is defeated or injured, the player has the option of either switching to a support character or continuing the fight with the original.



As in the first game, all stances (Kamae) and strikes will be ultra realistic and true to their Japanese form, and the rival clans are from different schools of fighting. The Sha-In have mastered 'Iai' techniques (such as in Iaido) where the sword is drawn lightning fast as an attack, this move is almost guaranteed to kill instantly if it connects! However, the Meikyou clan have also mastered Nito-Ryu and are able to use two swords at once! This balances out their defence, and makes attacks more versatile, but can also hinder movements and swings.



The original version offered three different body postures (high, middle, and low) during battle, but in the new game only the high and low positions are possible, with a back-handed move in place of the mid stance. Other changes will be faster, smoother gameplay; improved defence capabilities (like better attack deflection); the subtraction of the rapier and sledge hammer from the arsenal of weapons; and front and back sword positioning.

In the original you could block attacks with the parry button, but this has been removed and now you have to counter with regular attacks or jumping, ducking, etc. With only two attack buttons now, they represent 'normal' attack and 'reversed wrist' attack. By combining the direction pad with the attack buttons, you can unleash a variety of attacks.

Square has also decided to throw out traditional blades-only fighting with the inclusion of selectable gun-toting characters. The guns can shoot up and down, making it extremely hard to come in close. But don't get too cocky, the bullets aren't unlimited. In fact, you'll have to change clips and reload, so aim carefully! The previous game's



gun boss (The Black Cat) is a rapid firing sniper, one of the deadliest opponents you will face in the game, and the once naginata-wielding Tsubame

has ditched the huge spear in favour of an automatic rifle!

Warring clans

Instead of trying the escape from the Kage (a deadly assassins' guild) as in the original, *Bushido Blade 2* pits clan against clan in a deadly Japanese feud. The Meikyou clan (of the original) led by Mikado, discovered much later that their internal troubles were being caused by another rival clan, the Sha-In (the 'true' enemy alluded to in the first game). Ruled by their fearsome leader Gengoro, the Sha-In are strongly opposed to the Meikyou way of honourable swordfighting and instead prefer a life of wealth, treachery and other temptations of evil. With the good and bad guys clearly established, the stage is set for an awesome battle! Due out in Japan in mid-March, we keenly await news of a translation .



● Zeta Gundam

RELEASE DATE: IMPORT

DEVELOPER: BANDAI

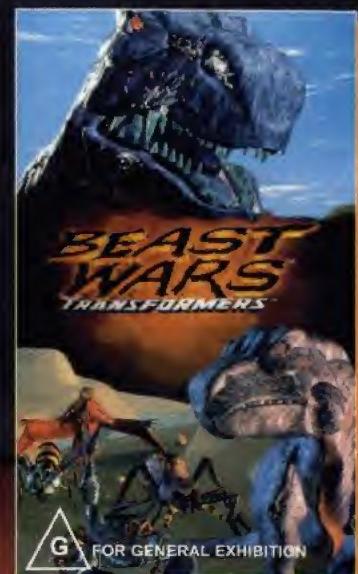
Shipping on two CDs, Zeta Gundam lets you play the one-on-one combat game from the perspective of two of the main characters. Essentially it's Virtua On set in the Z Gundam universe, but the mobile suits do battle with a noticeably different feel. The trick is to anticipate incoming enemy fire and block them by raising your shield. As the Gundam's beam rifle cannot fire sustained bursts like the Valkyries of Macross Digital Mission VF-X, getting in close to attack with the beam sabre is perhaps the best - and more 'in your face' - combat strategy. As some of the missions are set in open space, there are no objects to hide behind either, so use that shield wisely! As you progress, you can arm the Gundam with the bazooka.

The pre-mission briefings usually include some great anime FMV scenes: like the Ghost in the Shell opening they sometimes combine cell animation with

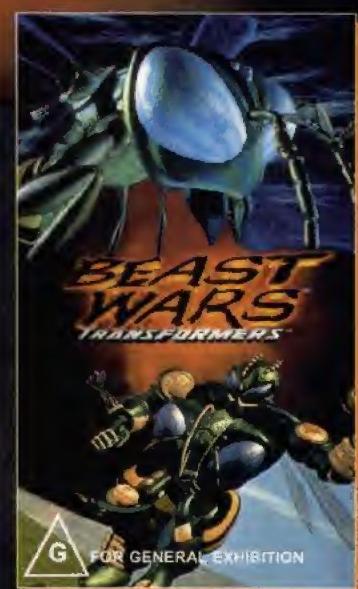
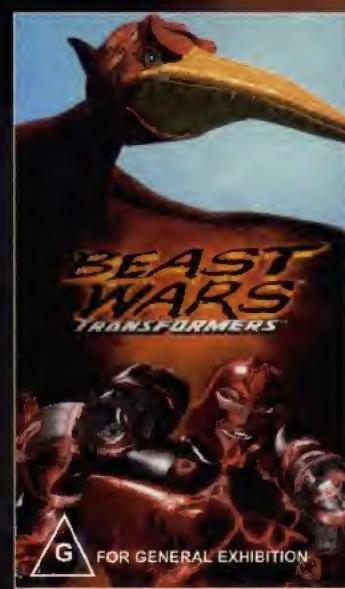


CG backgrounds. For long-time Gundam fans, the character designs have been slightly updated (since the show aired in the 80s), but they're unmistakable and look better than ever! The graphics are pretty good too - the detailed modelling of the mobile suits is great - but some of the textures, especially in the hangar, are very rough and simple. Sound effects are lifted straight out of the anime.

As a combat game, the controls certainly took a bit of getting used to after playing Armoured Core. But even once mastered, the movement and swirling camera makes the action disorientating. Thankfully, the gun targeting is auto-lock and will change to red when the enemy is acquired. The double CDs allow for a two-player link-up battle game, but no there's no split-screen mode, which is a shame considering how Armoured Core Project Phantasma managed to make the format very playable. Zeta Gundam will appeal to Gundam completists on the strength of the animated sequences, but the gameplay is just passable.



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Medievil

RELEASE DATE: JUNE 1998

DEVELOPER: SCEA CAMBRIDGE

Here is an interview with the SCEA Cambridge development team on the forthcoming PlayStation game *Medievil*.

A bit of background information on the development team:

**JASON WILSON
(LEAD ARTIST)**

I've been involved in the games industry for the last ten years working on design and graphics for many titles on many platforms in that time. I am inspired through watching various fantastical films/B-movies and reading copious amounts of comic books, oh and playing cool games.

JASON RILEY (ARTIST)

I had an illustration background prior to joining the games industry. Since starting work with Millennium Interactive (now SCEA Cambridge) I had worked on four titles prior to *Medievil*. Interests include film, art, keeping fit - four times a week. I've spent two years on *Medievil* doing certain in-game areas and all FMV sequences, using Alias and Avid Matador. Main influences are films directed by Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Peter Jackson, Tim Burton, Roland Emmerich, anything that has a good strong colour scheme.

**CHRIS SORRELL
(PRODUCER)**

In the nine years that I've been working on games I've been involved in graphics, design and

programming. I used to have interests - films, games, books, etc, but then *Medievil* started. As far as games are concerned I have most respect for Miyamoto-san and the various games he has been involved with.

• WHAT WAS THE MAIN INSPIRATION FOR MEDIEVIL?

CS: Definitely the style of Tim Burton's work, the kooky-spooky feel of films like the *Addams Family*, and game wise, the arcade game *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* from years back.

• WHAT MAKES MEDIEVIL DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PLATFORM ACTION GAMES, IE TOMB RAIDER, CROC, NIGHTMARE CREATURES?

CS: Although there are aspects of *Medievil* that are similar to these games, its gameplay mix is quite different to any of them. Our emphasis is foremost on zombie slicing action, with puzzle solving as a secondary factor and 'platform' gameplay quite low in the mix. The game also has some RPG-style elements, and has a pretty thick streak of black humour running through it all.

• HOW LONG HAS MEDIEVIL BEEN IN DEVELOPMENT?

CS: Design and graphic work for the project started early in 1996, programming in the summer (northern).

• HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE WORKED ON MEDIEVIL SINCE IT'S INCEPTION?

CS: Programming started with three people and has increased to six (including myself). We have had four artists plus Jason Wilson (lead-artist/design) working on the game throughout, and two people have worked on the game's mapping and enemy placement. Creation of the sound effects and music has been the shared responsibility of the three members of our in-house audio group.

• HOW DID YOU ACCOMPLISH THE AMAZING LEVEL OF DETAIL AND CRISPNESS IN THE GRAPHICS?

CS: To keep true to our Tim Burton-esque influences it was always going to be important for us to have a powerful and flexible game engine. We set out to create a system that would allow the artists to model worlds in a completely free manner (as opposed to the grid-block based approach used in many 3D games), and add further atmosphere to their work through programmed lighting and magic effects.

Medievil combines elements of platform, action, puzzle and RPG to produce a very fresh style of game



JW: A history in the old 8-bit days teaches you just what is and isn't possible within the limitations of given hardware. There is no excuse for sloppy looking textures on the PlayStation!

• WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF WITH MEDIEVIL?



Medievil



JW: Hopefully setting a new standard of visuals on the Playstation and keeping ahead of the N64 with regards to its hardware.

CS: I believe we've managed to achieve a level of detail, graphical richness, and a quantity of full-3D characters and objects that few games can match.

*** HOW DID THE MAIN CHARACTER DAN FORTESQUE EVOLVE?**

CS: We believe that Mr and Mrs Fortesque were very much in love, and in a special moment, their son Daniel came into existence. Forty three years later he died valiantly in battle. One hundred years after that his bony corpse was accidentally reanimated by powerful magic.

JW: From too many late nights brain storming with Chris Sorrell - we did many different skeleton types - we had massive bulky Dans with small heads, little Dans with huge cartoonish heads but we settled on the dorky fun look we



to pursue Zarok, fighting his henchmen, and negotiating the hazards that the sorcerer has left behind him. Inevitably Dan's quest leads him towards Zarok's fortress and ultimately into a direct confrontation with the wizard.

*** ARE THERE PLANS FOR HIDDEN OPTIONS / CHEATS IN MEDIEVIL?**

JW: Oh yeah - loads!

CS: I can't talk about the secret features - they're secret.

*** HOW MANY END BOSSSES ARE IN THE GAME? HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PLATFORM GAME BOSSSES?**

CS: There are guardians in the game, but we didn't set out to make *Medievil* the kind of game that relies too heavily on such characters - rather they appear only



when appropriate to the main storyline. I think the characters we have are pretty unique - a huge demon made from stained glass and a giant be-tentacled pumpkin are two that spring to mind.

*** HOW LONG DID THE CG SEQUENCES TAKE TO PRODUCE? HOW MANY ANIMATORS ARE WORKING ON MEDIEVIL?**

CS: We have had just one artist working on FMV, while three other artists handled the in-game graphics. Of these, one has worked as lead animator throughout while the other two have handled all character and world modelling and supplemental animations.

JR: I worked on the CG sequences. There are two intros, an outro, and 10 other individual small storytelling segues, totalling 14 minutes. These took a year and a half to make. There are a lot of scenes and a lot of editing took place to make the pacing more punchy.

MEDIEVIL IS DUE TO BE RELEASED SHORTLY AND WE HOPE TO BRING YOU A FULL REVIEW IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE



have now. Our rough Dan was then tidied up by Mitch Philips who is our animator and then he further evolved through the FMV sequences.

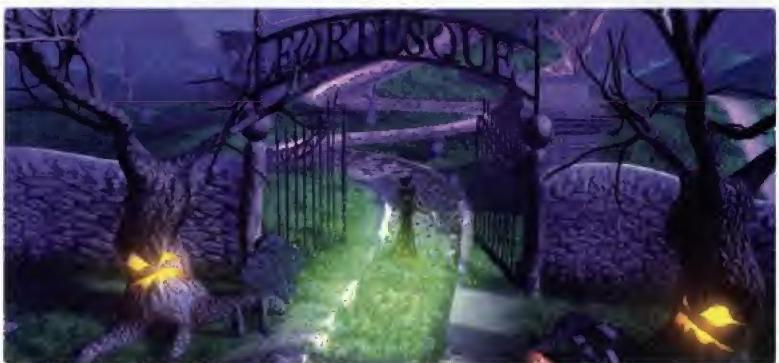
CS: We like the idea of having a hero that was heroic but at the same time quite goofy. Dan has become a kind of undead Dirk the Daring!

*** TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE STORYLINE**

CS: The core storyline is classic good vs evil, but with a fair few twists along the way... As mentioned, Sir Dan starts the game dead, but is reanimated as a side-effect of the evil magic that his arch nemesis, the sorcerer Zarok is using to spawn a skeleton army. Caught up in Zarok's evil scheme, Dan has little choice but



with influences as diverse as Tim Burton, Ghost and Ghouls, and the Addams Family, it's no wonder that the graphics and gameplay in *Medievil* have such a decidedly quirky feel



Kula World

RELEASE DATE: MAY 1999

DEVELOPER: SCEA

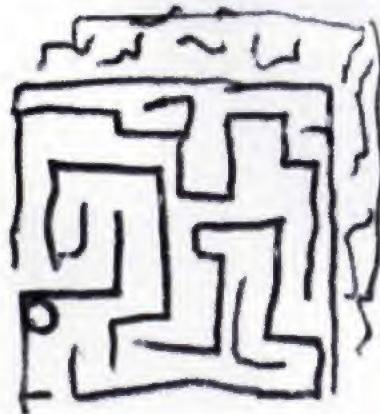
Although the PlayStation hasn't had a great number of original puzzle games (*Kurushi* being a notable exception), *Kula World* looks set to reverse the trend. This new puzzler from Sweden redefines the genre in terms of complexity, design and weirdness.

In *Kula World* you're a beach ball. And you roll around picking up a variety of crystals, fruit and coins. You move by rolling and you can bounce across gaps, but be careful - the playing field is suspended in mid-air and if you fall, you'll soon find that you're not filled with helium! The aim of the game is to find all the keys in a puzzle and then head to the exit. Of course, it's never as simple as that. The puzzles themselves are 3D sort of stone things. And you can cling to any side of them, meaning you often have to work out a way to get upside down to get the keys. In terms of design, they're not unlike the painting of M.C. Escher, only a little more user friendly. There are also plenty of things to get in your way - patches of hot coal, spikes, even little capsules that make your world get a little, err, odd for a while. The puzzles quickly grow in complexity - just because you knock over the first few easily, it doesn't mean they won't start to knock your socks off. *Kula World* is a very challenging game.

The design is certainly unusual, and it's not overly surprising that it came about after its designer woke up from a dream in which he was a beach ball travelling through a maze. He woke up and quickly sketched down the details. Several months after that, *Kula World* was born.

The greatest feature on *Kula World* is its addictiveness. Even on the preview

The dream sketch that started it all



copy at work, it was hard not to say 'just one more go' after dying, or 'just one more level' after finishing a puzzle. It promises many a night of hardcore gaming followed by red eyes at work the next day!

YOU MIGHT WONDER WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE MAKE A GAME LIKE THIS. WELL THE WHOLE THING WAS DESIGNED BY A FOUR MAN TEAM FROM SWEDEN: JOHANNES (GRAPHIC ARTIST), JENS (PROGRAMMER AND LEVEL DESIGNER), JESPER (PROGRAMMER) AND STEFAN (ALSO A PROGRAMMER). THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW MIGHT JUST OFFER SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE MINDS RESPONSIBLE FOR KULA WORLD...

*** WHAT WAS THE MAIN INSPIRATION FOR KULA WORLD?**

Jesper: It is from a dream our graphics designer Johannes Söderqvist had one night two years ago.

Johannes: Yes, it was so strange - I just woke up with this strong image of a giant silvery 3D maze with a lonely ball... I drew a quick sketch and then almost forgot about it. A couple of months later some friends and I started



The complex twisting 3D mazes will push you to the edge of your wits

Jesper: *Kula World* is in a fast real-time 3D environment. That the world flips when you roll into a wall makes this game unique.

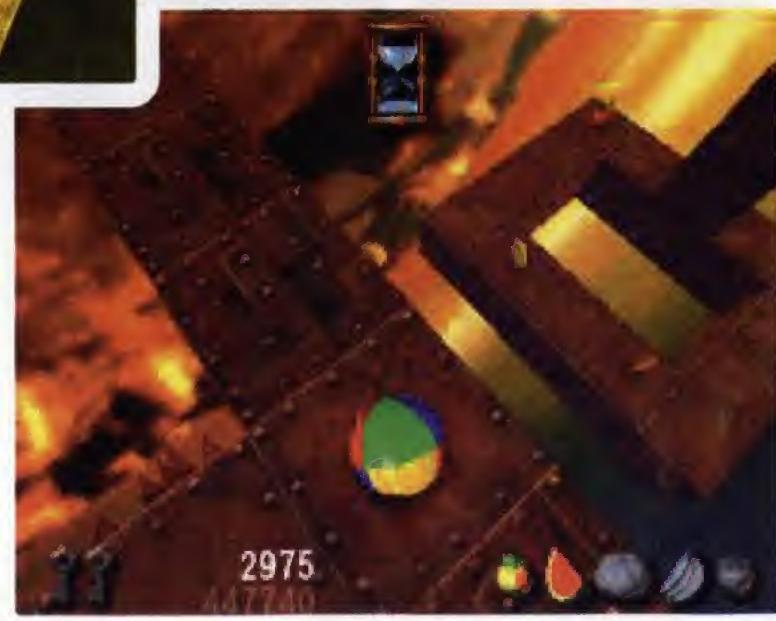
Johannes: It is a puzzle game, but at the same time it takes full advantage of the PlayStation's 3D capabilities, which is not that common with puzzle games.



to talk about game concepts, I remembered my dream and we began a lengthy discussion about how cool it could be with lots of tricky traps.

We were excited about the strong game play possibilities, and we thought it could be a game that used many classic elements from strong games from the eighties, but in a new amazing way. But we were not sure if it would actually work as a game or if it was one of those cool ideas that never work... It is a complex game, and the levels are hard to figure out and try just in your head, especially if you've never seen the game in motion.

*** WHAT MAKES KULA WORLD DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PUZZLE GAMES, IE BUST A MOVE OR TETRIS?**



Kula World

It makes for a very good combination with other more action/platform elements as well.

*** HOW LONG HAS KULA WORLD BEEN IN DEVELOPMENT?**

Jesper: For about 20 months. The long time it took to finish it is mainly because it was our first game ever and we wanted *Kula World* to be of the highest possible quality.

*** HOW DID YOU ACCOMPLISH THE AMAZING LEVEL OF SPEED AND CRISPNESS IN THE GRAPHICS? HOW FAST IS THIS GAME RUNNING?**

Jesper: To make the game look better we use a combination of pre and real time, calculated depth-queuing, subdivision and mipmapping on the textures to reduce ugly folding and alias, thousands of textures for the background, lots of transparencies and shading effects. LOD (Level of detail) on the objects also makes the game faster.

To keep the frame rate at 50 Hz Stefan has hand-coded the time intensive parts of the game in an assembler to get the highest possible speed.

*** WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF WITH KULA WORLD?**

Jesper: The gameplay without doubt.

That people really likes to play the game both the hardcore gamers and the ones who never have played a game before.

Johannes: Also, this has been very unusual in many ways, this is our first game, and it is a very unusual game. We could have made our first game a more common style... I believe that small upcoming companies like us have to have a strong and perhaps bold game concept to get our foot in the business.

*** HOW DID THE BEACH BALL IDEA EVOLVE?**

Johannes: The dream and the first test animations had a chrome ball, there are of course some obvious problems with this! So we went for a plastic colourful beachball instead. Then when we talked to various publishers many of them suggested that we should try some kind of character. We actually spent some time designing a cute round orange little animal with long happy ears, with full animation. It had exactly the same performance as the ball, but we thought it would distract from the basic puzzle theme.

*** HOW BIG IS THIS GAME? IS THERE MUCH REPLAYABILITY IN KULA WORLD?**

Jesper: It will feature 200 levels, 12



different graphics environments and a two-player mode. From our experience and Sony's internal testing panel the game has a very high "just one more time" appeal. Most levels are non-linear and there are many ways to solve the same level. The concept is very open for different interpretations. We build levels with combinations we never thought of when we started. And then when we see people play, they solve the level in several ways we did not think of, but it still works!

*** HOW DID THE IDEA FOR KULA WORLD EVOLVE?**

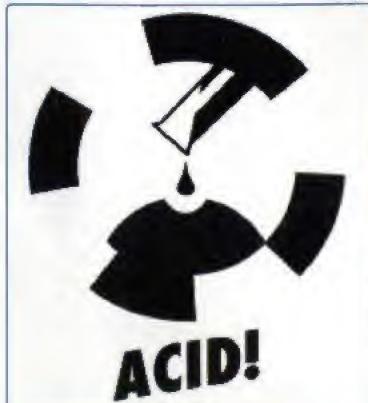
Jesper: Johannes made some test animations in 3D studio. We looked at the animations and thought we could do that in real-time.. We started with the core of the game, the 3D engine and the level editor. Then we added ability to jump with the ball, things to collect, motion blur pills, the background environment and transparent blocks. Gradually via many brainstorm sessions, used and lost ideas the game evolved to what it is today.

*** IF YOU HAD TO SUM UP THE ONE REASON THAT THIS PUZZLE GAME WILL APPEAL TO GAMERS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**



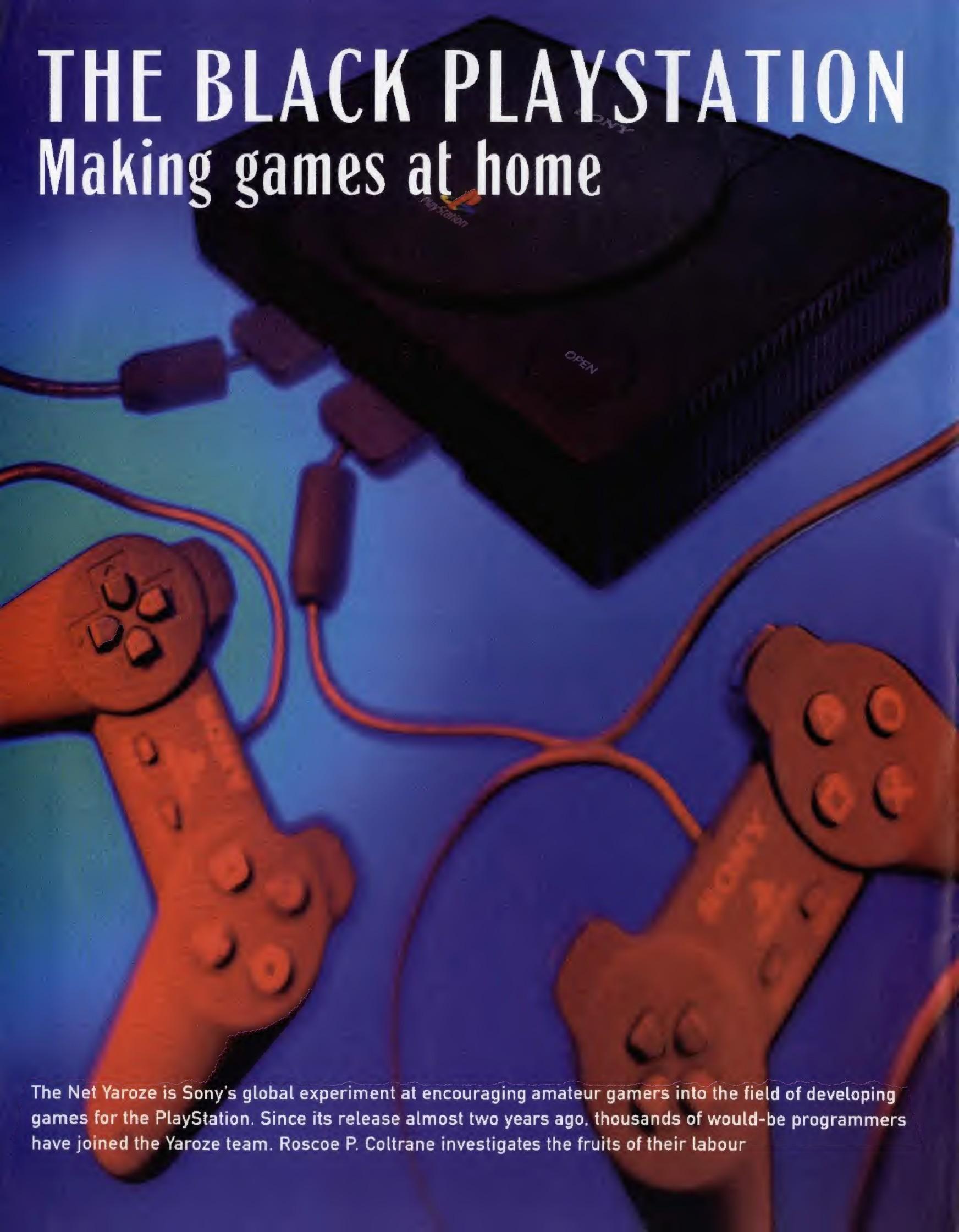
Jesper: It is a totally new gaming experience. It sets new standards both in gameplay and graphics. Also, it is suitable for a wide age group, and it appeals to girls as well. There is almost no violence.

Somewhere between puzzle and platform, *Kula World* has a number of dangers you'll need to avoid



THE BLACK PLAYSTATION

Making games at home

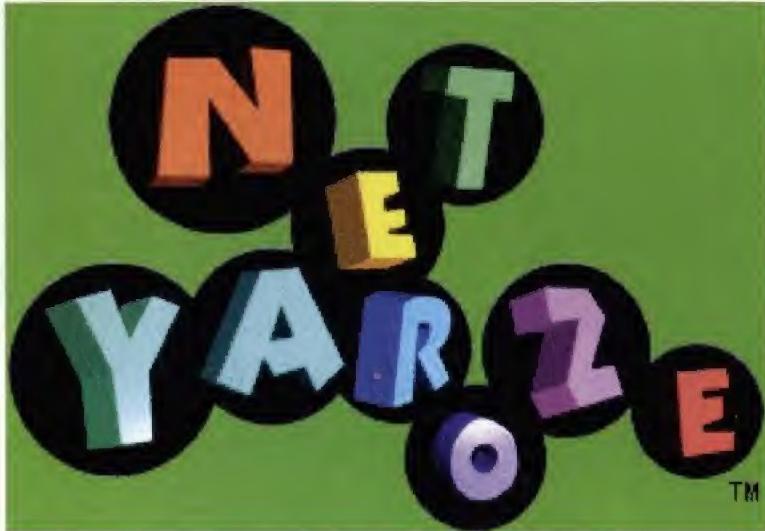


The Net Yaroze is Sony's global experiment at encouraging amateur gamers into the field of developing games for the PlayStation. Since its release almost two years ago, thousands of would-be programmers have joined the Yaroze team. Roscoe P. Coltrane investigates the fruits of their labour

Net Yaroze - The State Of Play

Many readers will have heard of the Net Yaroze PlayStation by now. Released about 18 months ago in Japan and a bit later everywhere else, the Yaroze is part of Sony's innovative effort to bring back the days of the lone programmer, and try and bring some new talent into the PlayStation game design world as well. The Yaroze is basically a PlayStation with a PC interface and a bunch of software tools that allows games to be written on the PC (or Mac) and then dumped into the PlayStation for testing and playing. Thousands of black PlayStations have been sold all over the world, a number of which reside in

programmer from scratch is no mean feat! Another delaying factor that seems to have affected quite a few Yaroze programmers is the limitation the machine places on them only being able to use the PlayStation's internal code libraries, rather than allowing them to make their own. Libraries are sort of shortcuts the programmers can use when programming in C or another such language and it saves them having to write machine codes to access the base level commands and functions of the machine. The PlayStation's built in libraries aren't the best however, and run a bit too slowly to be used in cutting edge game design, which is why developers like Infogrames (V-Rally) and Psygnosis



various places around Australia and New Zealand, and people are starting to ask the question: where are the Yaroze games?

To be fair to the people who bought a Yaroze, it's still early days yet. Becoming a game designer and

(*Wipeout 2097, Formula 1*) write their own libraries for each game they produce. Well, it seems that a lot of Yaroze owners want to do the same thing and many of them have spent their time working around the limitations that Sony placed on the



Above: The elusive Net Yaroze PlayStation in all its matte black glory. More than just cool looking, the Yaroze actually lets you write your own games. Below: The full Net Yaroze package comprises of the black PlayStation, software and connections to hook it up to your PC.

Yaroze in the design of its programming software. So rather than develop games, what we have are a bunch of sub-programs, APIs and hacks which allow the owners to do more with the system than Sony originally intended. Yaroze owners who have concentrated on making games however, have been producing some interesting little demos, and some of the Japanese owners have made some very nice little games indeed (they got their machines six months before the west, mind you).



discs from Sony HQ. After scaling the fence, shooting the guard dogs, seducing the receptionist and weeing in the toilet with the seat down, we actually managed to get our hands on some of these secret demos. Unfortunately, we lost a few men along the way but that, as they say, is the price of victory. From what we've seen on these discs, the Japanese Yaroze owners have definitely got the jump on everyone else. Some of the Japanese demos also look suspiciously like they've been put together by real commercial developers, but it's impossible to know for sure (until we raid Sony's bunker again at least).

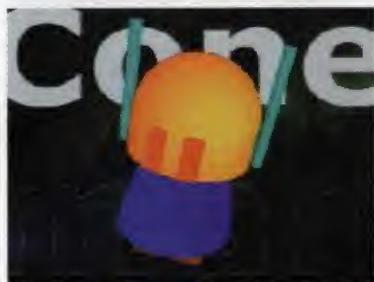
The Games

Frustrated with a lack of vital information, PlayStation Magazine recently launched a covert operation aimed at liberating certain Yaroze demo

Left: For players who've dreamed of making their own game, the Net Yaroze lets you do it. All you need is a PC, a little talent, and time!

West

The European Yaroze creations (most of which came out of England), all display a bit of nostalgia in their style, with a lot of the demos on that disc being recreations of old classics or simple graphics experiments. The most spot on of these is probably Tuna



Technologies ManicX, which is a straight rip-off of that old classic *Pac-Man*. *ManicX* is fast and polished and, while it may seem like a waste of the PlayStation's power, is very good for a first effort. On the same but slightly different bent is Cars Barsteds' *Coneman* (ahem), which is a 3D third person (ie. like *Tomb Raider*) *Pac-Man*. Cars still has a bit to learn about gameplay however, with a really bad choice of viewing angle and control



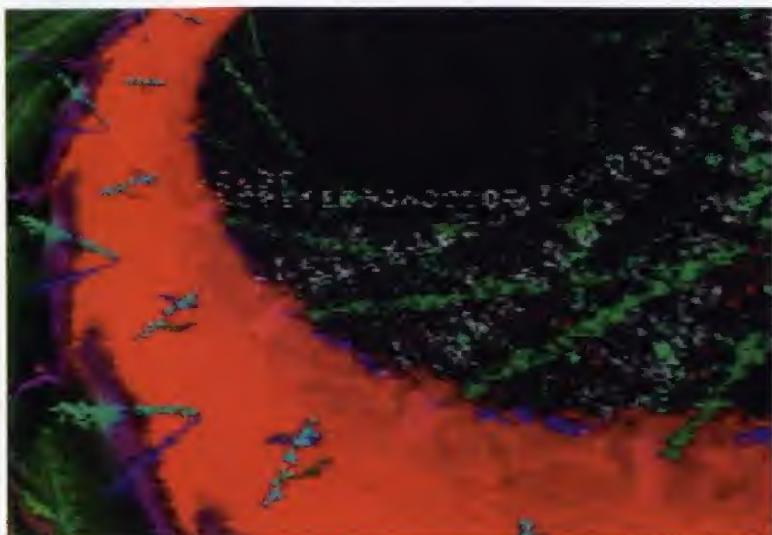
These games are from European developers and many show influences from past classics such as *Pac-Man*, *Breakout*, *Asteroids* and a host of old Amiga titles.

layout making this hard to play. The most accomplished works on the European disc are probably Stuart Ashley's *Clone*, Lewis Evans' *Between the Eyes* (featured on our issue #6 demo CD) and *Engine 6* by Derek Leigh-Gilchrist. *Clone* is a simple *Doom* clone set in a dungeon type environment, and

admittedly it's not something you'd want to pay money for. It is, however,

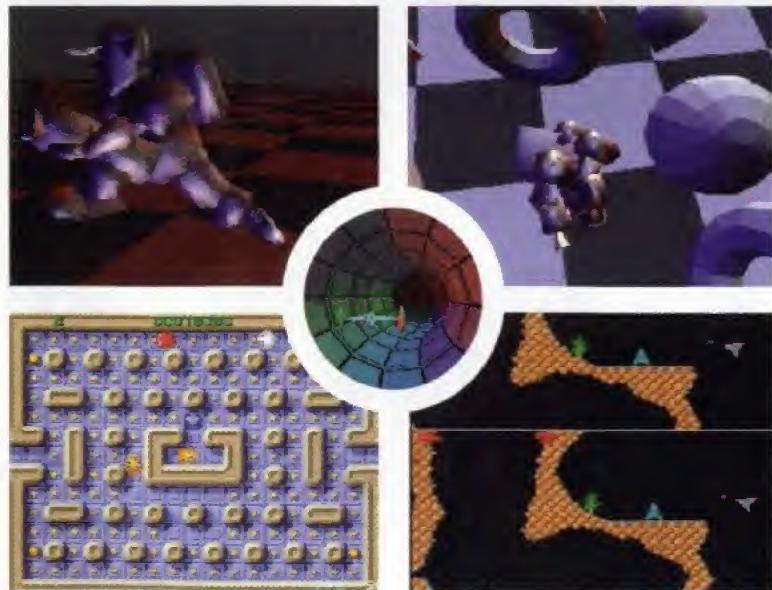


very solid, and serves as an indication of the potential offered. The graphics are smooth and wobble free, the collision detection is on the money and the controls fast and responsive too. *Between the Eyes* is a 3D tunnel racer that allows you to choose one of several



East

Unfortunately for the European ego, the Japanese disc leaves the European one for dead, both in terms of gameplay and production quality. It is here that we can see the Yaroze actually living up to its promise. As soon as we saw the first title it screamed 'Japanese' so loudly we had a tourist bus pull up outside the office. No hackneyed old arcade clichés here. The stand out title is easily Fatal Soft's *Terra Incognita*, a sort of 3D RPG platform game, kind of like the love-child of *FFVII* and *Gex 3D!* This effort was polished so hard it gleamed! A groovy little animated interactive intro and funny Jap-lish translation topped off a fast and smooth little gem. You could well be seeing this in stores some time in the future. The



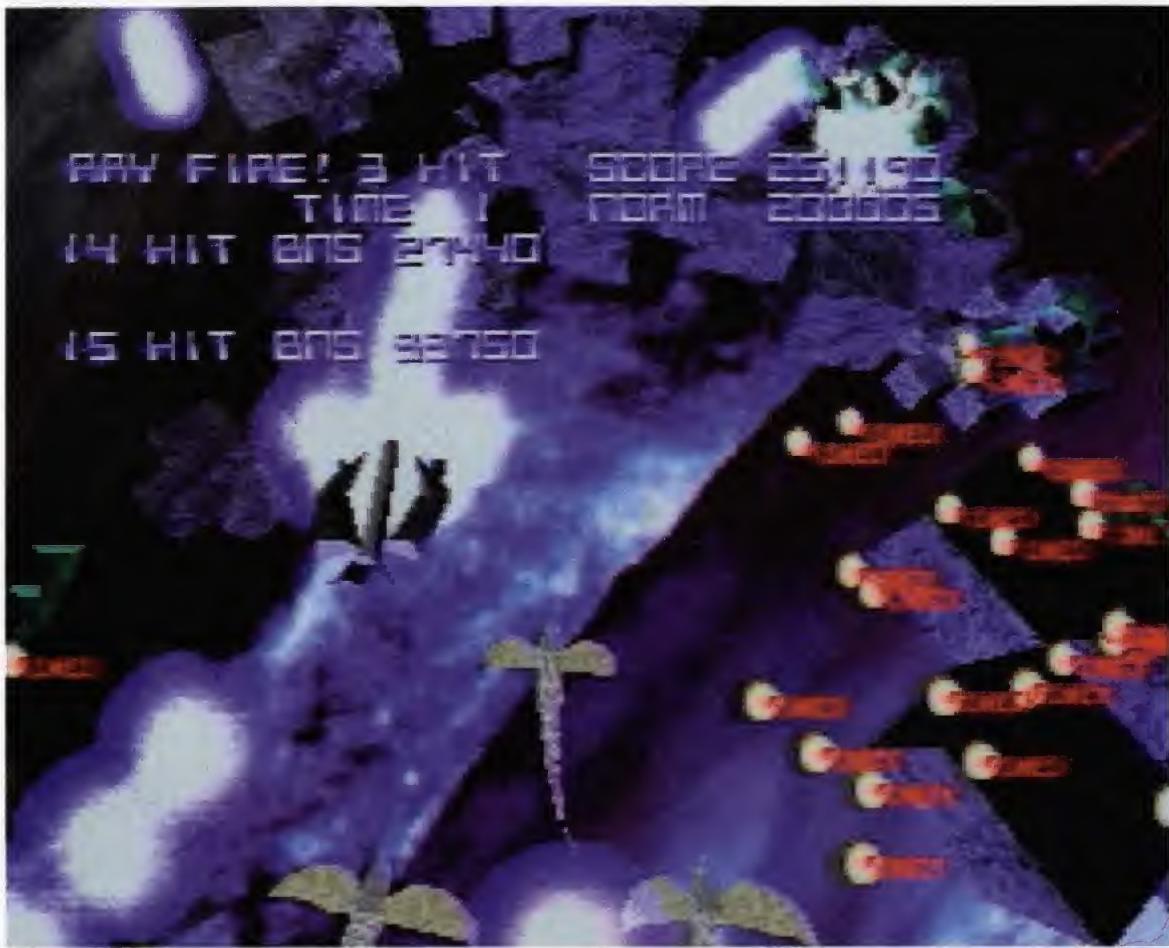
Above, right and below: One of the most promising Yaroze games from Japan is Fatal Soft's *Terra Incognita*.

space ships and race computer opponents through a giant hollow psychedelic spaghetti. *Engine 6* is a little on the freaky side too, but is simply a

3D engine test program with a few solid figures sitting in a 3D landscape. It does have one unique feature though - it demonstrates a special effect known as environmental mapping, something that the N64 has built in but which the PSX doesn't normally handle very well.

other really awesome game on this disc was a shooter that unfortunately had no English translation for its name or developer, so I'll refer to it as *Game X*. *Game X* is a truly beautiful thing and it's doubtful whether the developer used Sony's internal libraries - it's just too fast and busy for that. The closest thing I can compare it to is *Xevious 3D*, but it's even spunkier than that! A top-down





shooter with lush 3D asteroids and alien ships coming in wave after wave, and some really wicked Manga style weapons to crush them with - tops! Coming in close behind these two is *Hover Race*, which has you zooming around the streets of Tokyo in a little hovercraft of your choice in a race against several computer controlled competitors. This title features a smooth frame rate and very cute graphics, as does *Tan Tank* by Team Spirit and *Nana Tan* by someone else (more Japanese). Both of these games use tank battles as the basis of their gameplay, and do it with style. *Tan Tank* is actually a complete game and quite addictive to boot. Blast your way through ever more difficult levels against increasingly deadly foes with guided missiles, a machine gun and your main cannon.

If I was to give an award for the funniest game in this set it would have to go to *Gas Girl*. *Gas Girl*? You know that old saying "I wouldn't throw her out of bed if she farted"? Well, *Gas Girl* is here to put it to the test! She's a nicely rendered 3D platforming gal whose bowels have been turned into a lethal weapon by deranged Japanese scientists. Fluff your way through the caverns to freedom! Finally a little thing called *Fujiyama*, not a game but an interactive postcard of Mount Fuji, photographed from various angles from the small towns that sit at its base - nothing as crazy as that on the Euro disc! So once

The Japanese games follow tried and tested styles. Above: This untitled shooter takes elements from Xevious. Below: Hover Race is like F-Zero. Below left: Gas Girl saves the day!

again the Japanese prove that ultra conformity, extreme insecurity, massive psychological repression and a panty vending machine on every street corner is the secret of successful games industry. Or maybe they just released the Yaroze outside Japan six months later to make the rest of us look bad?

There is still no definite Yaroze star, no announced commercialisation of any titles and, in the West, interest seems to be declining a bit with most independent Yaroze sites closing down. But on the strength of the Japanese Yaroze games alone, Sony can claim a success here and has indeed flushed out some previously hidden and worthwhile talent.

Where do I sign up?



Before you rush off and make your own game, you'll need to know the basic requirements.



Hardware-wise you'll need a 486DX2 66 PC or faster, with one or more serial ports and a modem (at least 28.8 bps

recommended) for connection to the Net Yaroze Web site, a CD ROM drive, a hard disk with 10Mb free (to set up basic development environment), at least 4Mb RAM and a SVGA PC monitor. As support, for contact with other Members and demo exhibitions based around the Member's Web site, Net Yaroze Members are advised to have an Internet connection.

Do not expect to use Net Yaroze to learn how to program. In order to get started with Net Yaroze, you should have experience in C programming and a knowledge of a 2D graphic creation/editing tool. In addition, at least a basic grasp of a 3D modelling package and a sound creation/editing tool would help you get the best out of your Net Yaroze kit.

The Net Yaroze kit comes complete with everything you need to get programming for the member's Net Yaroze PlayStation. However, some may prefer to use the complete development environment of Code Warrior (Windows 3.1 or Windows 95) which is compatible with the Net Yaroze kit. There is also a Code Warrior for Macintosh users.

Full details of what you'll need and how to purchase the Net Yaroze system can be found at the official web site: www.scei.sony.co.uk/yarinfo/index.html

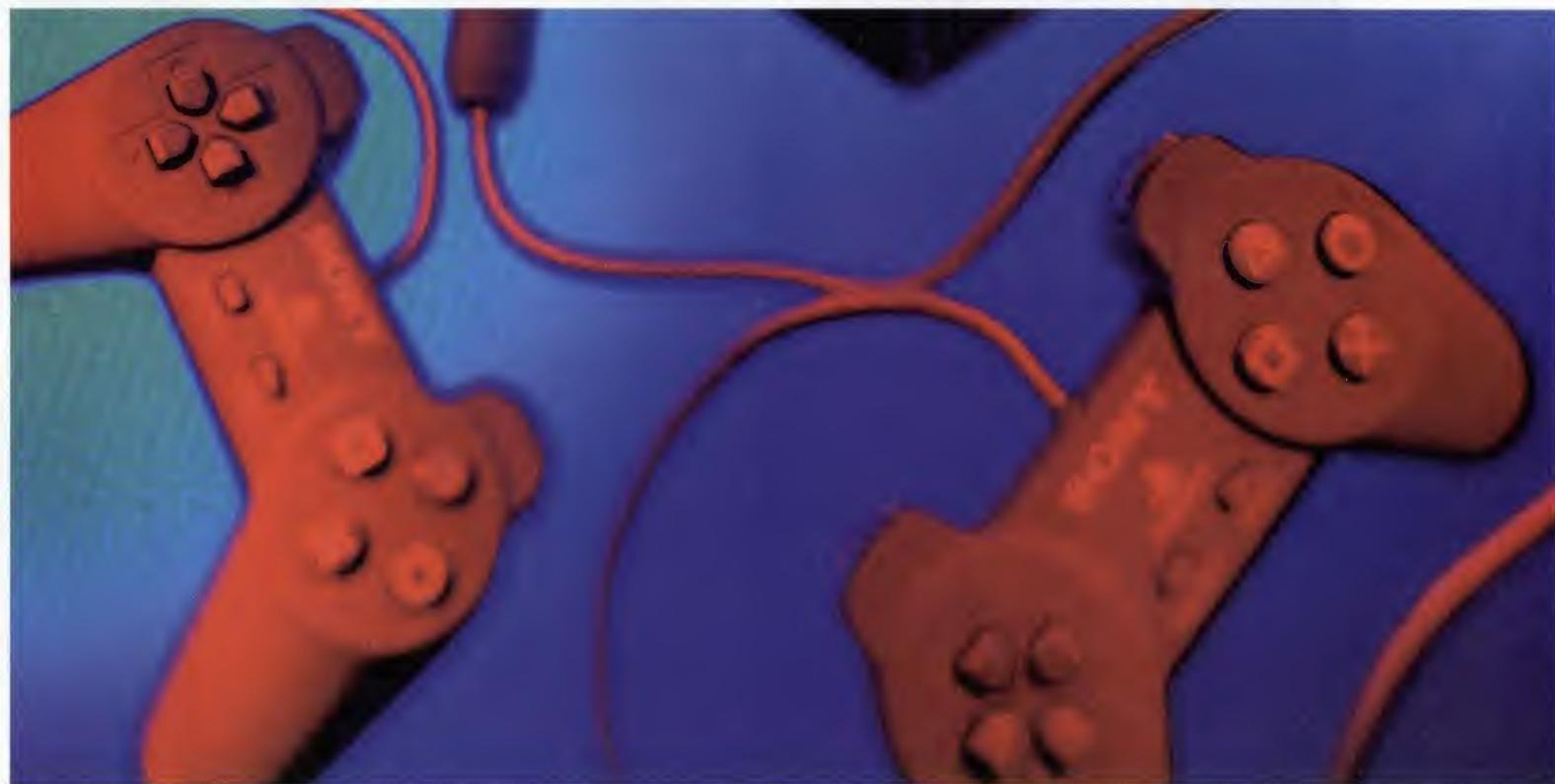


School Games

The Digital Entertainment Academy (DEA) in central Tokyo is one of the new colleges in Japan which provides dedicated courses in game design. DEA courses cover graphic and creative design and programming

which nearly 1000 students have attended to date. There are 359 students currently studying at the college. The Academy uses modern, leading edge equipment including all the usual platforms and now the startlingly innovative Net Yaroze games development system, with 53 students currently developing on Net Yaroze. The college chose to use this development system so they could give students hands-on experience with the world's leading new generation games console.

Right: The Digital Entertainment Academy in Tokyo. Not time to muck around in this classroom, the students are too busy playing and making games!
Left: The curious Cat Game.



Official Australian PlayStation Magazine Ratings Guide

Every game featured in our Play Test section has been reviewed independently and objectively by our team of writers. We aim to give you an informed idea of what the game is about and, most importantly, whether it's good or bad.

Each title reviewed receives an overall score out of 10 which should be seen in the context of the type of game and in relation to similar titles it's competing with. For example; a score of 7 is high praise for a 16-bit style 2D platform game, whereas a 3D fighting game receiving the same score is by no means sub standard, but indicates that it could have been better when seen next to the likes of Tekken 2 and Soul Blade.

10	- An instant classic, you must play this game!
9	- Exceptionally good. Add it to your collection now
8	- A very good effort more than worthy of attention
7	- A good game that does the job it was designed to
6	- Has some nice ideas, but could have been better
5	- Not good, but alright if you like that sort of thing
4	- This is not what you bought a PlayStation for!
3	- Oh dear, something has gone horribly wrong...
2	- Don't bother, a waste of both time and money
1	- Impress your friends with a cool black drink coaster!

The following factors are awarded up to five stars

Graphics -	Does the game look good and has it taken advantage of the available technology?
Sound -	The PlayStation offers developers the potential to create mind blowing audio. Have they?
Gameplay -	This is what it boils down to. Is the game enjoyable and fun to play, or will you be hurling the joypad at the TV?
Lifespan -	How long can you expect this game to hold your interest? Will you play it again after you've beaten it?
Presentation -	Does the game have an intuitive interface, or do you spend half the time in set-up screens or waiting for it to load?
Players -	Some games allow two or more players to take part, either alternately or simultaneously, and some can be even linked to a second PlayStation for full-screen head-to-head two-player action
Peripherals -	Many games take advantage of after-market devices such as analog controllers, steering wheels, Sony's PlayStation Mouse, various light guns, the Multi-tap five-player adaptor and other third party joysticks and accessories
Memory Card -	Some games require a memory card to save secret characters and newly discovered levels or circuits. Do you need a memory card to get the most out of this game?

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Resident Evil 2

■ PUBLISHER: Virgin

■ DEVELOPER: Capcom

■ RELEASE: May

■ PRICE: TBA

■ CLASSIFICATION: MA15+

"No mercy for the dead!" screamed **Amos Wong** as he bolted out of the office clutching a copy of Resident Evil 2. "I'm off to the gun shop" he yelled, "you stay here and board up the windows!"

When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth.' That's what the 80s zombie classic Dawn of the Dead said anyway. Hell's an awfully big place if you ask me, so it takes a little science to bring back the dead if you're keen. Something called a T-Virus, in fact. Engineered by the Umbrella Corporation and set loose in a mansion on the outskirts of Raccoon City, the ensuing outbreak of genetic abominations were taken care of by Resident Evil's S.T.A.R.S. team. Months later, Umbrella are still up to no good: the new creatures borne from their new G-Virus makes the old lot look like Snoopy - and this time they've taken over the city!

Resident Evil 2 is the A-grade sequel to the previously terrifying but nevertheless B-movie horror fest. You can tell straight away: the cheesy live action intro is replaced by a mind blowing CG movie sequence. The game comes on two discs: one for Leon Kennedy, the rookie cop driving into

town to serve his first day and the other for Claire Redfield in search of her brother Chris - S.T.A.R.S. member from the first game. The intros are set in the same time frame but focuses on each character as they enter the city. Getting a very enthusiastic welcome from the undead after a bit of fresh meat, the fleeing duo cross paths and take off in a patrol car. But in no time they're met by the front end of a petrol tanker set on a collision course! Separated by the burning wreck, Leon and Claire have to make their way to the police building alone. It's the only safe place in town, right?

Not only is the presentation slicker, the graphics have also been upped a notch or two. All the characters, from the heroes to the freaks, are more intricately detailed and lightsourced. The main characters now constantly keep their eyes on any creatures nearby and react after sustaining damage - when they're hobbling at a snail's pace you'd better



1) Tasty! 2) Unusual camera angles add atmosphere to RE2 3) This is one game which certainly deserves its MA15+ rating



find some medicine quick! Backgrounds are stunningly photo realistic with better 'horror movie camera angles' that often paralyse you in fear of what lies ahead. In addition to the 'waterfall' effects, there's a little more animation like a spinning fan in an office, revolving clock gears or steam emanating from pipes in industrial areas.

The ambient sound effects and music create an even more foreboding atmosphere than the previous game. Subtle sounds include glass or debris crunching under your feet and different footstep sounds depending on the room's floor surface, whether it be a solid thunk of metal grates or creaking wood. Zombie moans, shuffling undead feet and other creature noises are spine chilling as always, but best of all, there are now more sudden load shocks guaranteed to make you scream and jump out of your chair - I certainly did a that a lot! For maximum enjoyment folks, really crank up the volume!



Resident Freaks!

Welcome to Raccoon City! These friendly townsfolk are always more than happy to offer help and advice if you're looking for exotic ways to die. They're not hard to find - just take a leisurely wander around. If there's an overwhelming stench of decay, you'll know one's not far away!



Slimy Plant Creature

A somewhat more deadly variation of the giant singing plant from Little Shop of Horrors. They're slow, but projectile vomit venom and their long arms can either whip you or drag you into a deathly embrace!



Zombies

GUY ZOMBIE: it's a shame we've got such bad skin!

Dumb and slow, zombies nevertheless tend to wander in large groups, so you'd best have a substantial weapon in hand before facing off with them. Lots more variations this time round too!



Licker

These skinless freaks make the most blood curdling noise and will drop down from nowhere or slither along a wall to greet you! They've also got massive claws and amazing tongues. Why, they can pierce your skin and rip your heart out!



Rotting dog

Some cultures love a canine feast once in a while, but they're obviously slack when it comes to waste disposal. Usually attacking in pairs, it's important not to let one get behind you. And turn that auto-aim off!



Zombies

GIRL ZOMBIE: Hey wow! We're posing like Calvin Klein models!



The Good Doctor

Feeling a bit ill? So is the doc, but that won't stop him from taking a closer examination of your brain!



Crows

These guys don't bring you back from the dead, give you powers and make you wear black leather - they want you dead!



Big Moth

LEON: Ummm, Claire? A moth has just eaten my uniform...

CLAIRE: Just swat the damn thing!

LEON: But it's as tall as I am. And it ate off my arms as well...

Comment

When I first played the Alien Trilogy game late one night, I made a surprising discovery: it put me totally on edge. I was literally sitting on the edge of my seat, leaning towards the TV, my ears open for that quiet "bip, bip" of the motion detector. I had never become that involved in a game before. But when I loaded up *Resident Evil 2* I realised something totally new - some games can scare the generic vernacular out of you!

Resident Evil never quite cut it for me. It was good, but the live action intro sequence, with its shocking acting and appalling late-night television show credits added a distinctly comical edge to the whole proceeding. In *Resident Evil 2*, they've eliminated the bad acting, opting instead for a fully rendered introduction that actually comes across even more realistic than the opening for *Resident Evil 1*! Even better than that, it actually sets a distinct (and quietly disturbing) atmosphere to the game.

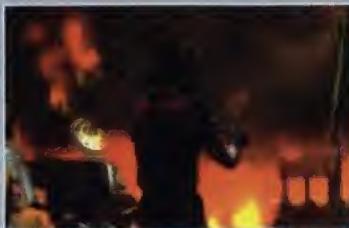
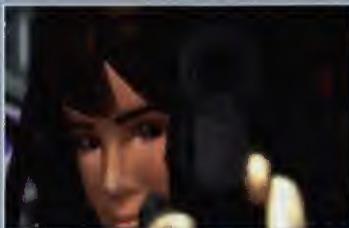
Resident Evil 2 is simply chilling. The subtle use of music, overshadowed by the excellent sound effects (zombie moans, echoing footsteps, etc.) works better than any horror film I've ever seen. The lurching zombies are actually more frightening than the other creatures such as the unfortunately named 'licker', mainly because they still look so human - yet not. It's exactly what every zombie flick has been trying to get for years, except that you're far, far more involved than just watching a film.

Of course, *Resident Evil 2* isn't perfect. I found the controls to be a little clunky, often making me run straight into the arms of the zombie I was trying to avoid. Similarly, there are small discrepancies in the programming - you can be limping along, barely able to run because you're so damaged, yet come to a flight of stairs and you'll practically dance up them like Fred Astaire.

But these are minor complaints which are just lost in the overall game. My opinion of *Resident Evil 2* can best be summed up by my reaction to one part of the game. I was walking down a section of corridor in the police headquarters, when a boarded up window shattered and all these arms came through and grabbed me. I actually managed to drop my controller pad while yelping in terror and attempting to push my chair back from the television.

As I said, *Resident Evil 2* is simply chilling.

- Nic



Twin tales of terror!

Depending on which character you play, you'll meet different people, access different weapons and become involved in different situations as the story develops. One of the new features of *Resident Evil 2* is that you will control supporting characters at certain times. For example, Claire meets Sherry, a little girl looking for her father. When she climbs through a small passageway to an area inaccessible by Claire, you control her and find various items that must be passed back to Claire in order for her to progress further. There are two scenarios for each character: upon completing the game as Claire (and saving the info after the end credits), pop in Leon's disc. Instead of starting his 'default mission,' the adventure begins from the time he's separated from Claire on the other side of the burning petrol tanker. Cool eh? What you do as one character will have an effect on the other, so really be thorough in your exploration or you'll be sorry! Upon finishing Leon's second scenario, I was given the prompt to play Claire's game again, but to reach the police station without picking up any items. Make it alive and receive a bonus...



the terror of this game! It supersedes the original not only in suspense and presentation (watch out for an awesome movie FMV half-way through the first scenario and ending sequences that'll blow your socks off), but also in the script and voice acting. Sure there are still a few unintentionally funny moments, but the characters actually give a decent performance this time around. Being able to play the game from the two characters' point of view during the same timeframe is perhaps the most significant improvement to gameplay. Consequently there's much more variation in the story compared to the original, and you're compelled to play the discs in all possible combinations to experience every facet of the night of terror in Raccoon City, not to mention the different endings. The supporting cast also differs slightly. Leon teams up with Ada Wong while



1) What's that thing on your chest? 2) Damn Japanese instructions 3) Eeny, meeny...

Claire, like Ripley from *Aliens*, shares her adventure with Sherry.

Brilliant a game as it is, *Resident Evil 2* isn't quite flawless. Dead bodies still disappear when you re-enter a room where creatures have been slain, but apart from that, graphic faults are so minor I'd be picking hairs. The new auto aiming option is useful against single enemies (you spin around and lock your aim in one smooth action), but it's a nightmare when you're surrounded, so change the options according to your situation. In terms of difficulty, the puzzle elements are much easier to solve. Even the bosses aren't as tough this time around (once you get used to their attack patterns), so each character's scenario doesn't take that long to complete - and this was on the normal difficulty setting! In some ways I wished each disc would last longer, but conversely the resulting game is faster paced - playing even more like a movie than its predecessor - with less periods of backtracking and wandering around while you're stuck on a puzzle. The emphasis in this game is terror. The shocks still get you the next time around and scenarios are definitely worth replaying, especially to achieve higher end-of-game rankings to get all the hidden extras. The less you save maximises your ranking on completion, and apparently upon finishing without a save unlocks a big bonus; it's a game of survival horror indeed. Bloodier and scarier, *Resident Evil 2* is an excellent sequel essential for any horror fan.



Alternatives

Few games can match the cinematic excellence delivered by *Resident Evil 2*. Make sure you check out the Director's Cut re-release of the original. *Clock Tower* isn't too bad, though it's not at all in the same class

Terrifying fun

Resident Evil 2 is the most terrifying experience in any horror medium of late. Seriously folks, I thought *Scream 2* had some great moments when I saw it a while back, but it doesn't even touch

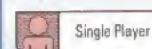
1) Blow those corpses... away 2) Plenty of beautiful lighting effects in RE2



■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★★	Stunning to the last bloody detail!
■ SOUND:	★★★★★	Use a pacemaker? Turn the volume down
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	The suspense is totally gripping
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	Could've been longer, but one hell of a trip!
■ PRESENTATION:	★★★	Meticulous attention to detail

Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories

Memory Card

Standard Controller

■ Overall: If you lament that horror movies just aren't as frightening as they used to be, try *Resident Evil 2*. Your blood will freeze

10

Spawn: The Eternal

■ PUBLISHER: Sony

■ DEVELOPER: Sony

■ RELEASE: April

■ PRICE: \$9.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: M15

From a comic that few had heard of came a movie that few went to see. Now here's the game, and **The Black Pig** hopes you won't have to play it

Originally a semi-underground comic hero with a dedicated cult following, *Spawn* has received a fair bit of interest recently due to the release of the Hollywood flick based upon his exploits. If you've managed to sleep through all this, *Spawn* is a slightly unbalanced gentleman with a latex fixation. He has returned to life after a Faustian pact with a devil called Malebogia. To atone for his life of evil he must now fight evil and blah, blah, blah. Game translation: walk around beating the crap out of the bad guys.

On the basis of such knowledge, *Spawn* has the potential to be quite a fun game, but as always there remains the problem as eternal as *Spawn* himself: the dodgy licensed product. While it's true that some licensed games have been decent (such as *Die Hard Trilogy* and *Alien Trilogy*), all too often the game seems to be secondary to the fact that producers believe the public will buy the name over the game. (*Independence Day* is a prime example.) So which category does *Spawn* fit into; derivative dreck or referential revelation?



Conceptually, *Spawn* is quite an interesting proposition. It combines elements from such diverse games as *Fighting Force*, *Nightmare Creatures*, *Tomb Raider*, *Tekken 2*, and even the quest mode in *Tobal No.1*. In *Spawn*, action takes place in a third-person format, with *Spawn* exploring his way through various areas (in semi-*Tomb Raider* style), stopping every now and then for a bit of biff. When these fights



1) As usual, the game doesn't live up to the comic 2) The combat scenes are a nice idea, but poorly done 3) Fire! 4) Great poster, man

occur, the combatants are confined to an area from which you cannot escape (as in *Tobal*'s quest mode), and in an unusual move, as soon as the fights commence the action shifts from third person action to a traditional 2D beat 'em up style. This move has obviously occurred to provide



better fighting action than has traditionally been presented in 3D scrolling fighters such as *Fighting Force*, but to truly assess the overall success of the game, we need to examine the two separate gameplay elements individually.

The 3D exploration part of the game is fair, but the objectives are a little uninspiring. There are keys to be found, switches to be flicked, secret rooms to locate and so on, but above all you'll be spending a lot of time wandering around aimlessly with lots of "go to one end of the level, flick a switch, now go on to the other end of the level". These parts of the game start off fairly well, but after a while the twitchy and cumbersome control method and the general similarity of the backgrounds involved will lead to unprecedented levels of tedium.

Thus we arrive at the 2D beat-em-up sections. Firstly, there are some interesting factors involved in the combat which combine the two areas of play successfully. Power-ups collected in the regular course of play (the various 'pyro' and 'cryo' orbs and etc.) are used in combat for the execution of special moves. On the positive side this brings an interesting element of management into the moves at your disposal. On the negative side,





however, the stock moves available most of the time are extremely limited. While *Spawn* looks kind of cool in these situations, your enemies are a little on the dull side and if this was just your regular 2D beat 'em up, only a truly fanatical *Spawn* devotee would bother.

On the production front, *Spawn* doesn't fare that well. The graphics are very dull and in the third person viewpoint, *Spawn* himself seems quite out of proportion. *Spawn* also has most of the problems endemic to mediocre third person games. The shifting camera angles tend to stop shifting at unfortunate points, leaving you with a fairly useless view. Obstacles which appear to be easily avoided aren't so easy to get around when you can't see them in front of your legs.



Sound is an almost non-existent factor in *Spawn*. Sound effects are sparse to say the least and the music (while of high calibre) only really occurs during the fight sequences and drops out mid note the very nanosecond the fight is completed. Where's the killer soundtrack from the film?

One very good point about *Spawn*, is the ability to save your game at any point whatsoever. Rather than only being able to save your game once or twice per level, you can save your location and status at any point,

1) "Take that, hellish gang member." 2) & 3)
Despite all else, *Spawn* himself looks good

allowing you to save just before a boss or some other piece of trickery. Of course, if it is abused by saving every couple of steps, the game loses any challenge it may have had to begin with.

In the end though, *Spawn* has only limited appeal to regular gamers as there are many other similar games with far greater appeal. Fanatical followers of *Spawn*'s exploits may find something in this game and have the perseverance to follow it up, but essentially this is just one more licensed product that the world could have done without. It's ironic that *Spawn* is Eternal, because only an immortal would have enough time on his hands to bother spending it on this game.

Game characters are well designed, but it really doesn't make up for the game itself



Alternatives

Tomb Raider 2 if you like exploration, **Tobal No.1** or **Tekken 2** if you like beating things up

Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories



Memory Card



Standard Controller



■ GRAPHICS:	★★	Blocky and repetitive
■ SOUND:	★★	Fair music but the effects are anaemic
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★	Two styles of play yet both suck
■ LIFESPAN:	★	Only fanatics will get much out of this
■ PRESENTATION:	★★★	Easy to get going for what it's worth

Overall: You are *Spawn*.

Feel the pain of his eternal damnation

5

Rascal

■ PUBLISHER: Psygnosis

■ DEVELOPER: Psygnosis

■ RELEASE: March

■ PRICE: \$89.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: G

There are quite a few good 3D platform games out at the moment, but as Steve Polak found to his lament, Rascal is not one of them

Let me start this one off with a few seemingly irrelevant comments. It is good to see a company like Psygnosis, which has largely relied on racing and 3D action games for its success on the PlayStation, branch out and try something different. It is also good to see PlayStation games developers doing their best to emulate the gameplay of arguably the best 3D adventure game on the planet, *Mario 64*.

But such an enterprise is ambitious undertaking for a company with no previous experience in this field, and as games like *Croc* and *Crash Bandicoot* have proven, emulating the gameplay success of the little plumber is a tough nut to crack. Enter stage left, *Rascal*, the 'hip and happening dude' with the 'funky' outfit and the pre-requisite baseball cap turned backwards.

Rascal the character was developed in conjunction with the late, great Jim Henson's Creature Workshop. As far as 'characters with appeal and attitude' go, *Rascal* is a pretty clichéd effort. ("Our market research indicates that by turning his cap 180° will increase the game's sales by 2.6%") All you need do is watch *Wayne's World* and a couple episodes of *Goosebumps* and you probably could have come up with *Rascal* in a few minutes. Compare him to some of the more inspired game characters like *Earth Worm Jim* or that sneaky hedgehog who seems to have disappeared off TV screens of late and I am sure you get the point. 'Nuff said.

So having drawn out and quartered young *Rascal* the character, how does the game fare? Well fortunately, Psygnosis hasn't dropped the ball totally, as *Rascal* is colourful and full of bright translucent lighting effects. The game sees you steering the tubby lad throughout a number of environments (the first is a castle), and some effort has been made to make the levels challenging. There are keys to collect, small and medium baddies to vanquish, and even a half-decent looking dragon to contend with in the first level. All in all, *Rascal* follows a fairly typical platform game formula that has stood the test of time ever since the 8-bit days of the NES and Master System.

Croc and *Muzzy*, their positioning can be downright frustrating when you're trying to guide *Rascal* through hostile environments, past baddies and from platform to platform. When you're trying to perform rudimentary manoeuvres (like backing up while you fire on an enemy who is rushing at you), the camera angle inexplicably shifts to totally obscure your view of the intended target! As a result, aiming *Rascal*'s bubble gun is one of



the single most unsatisfactory experiences to be had while playing the game. Unless you are moving directly forward or standing still, pointing the thing is little more than guesswork as the camera view of the action pans all over the place making it hard to keep your eye on where you are moving and your intended target at the same time.

Rascal also moves rather awkwardly, and the difference on the control pad between running around in circles and turning on the spot is negligible. The net effect being that you

Rascal has seriously sleek graphics, despite any clichés regarding the protagonist



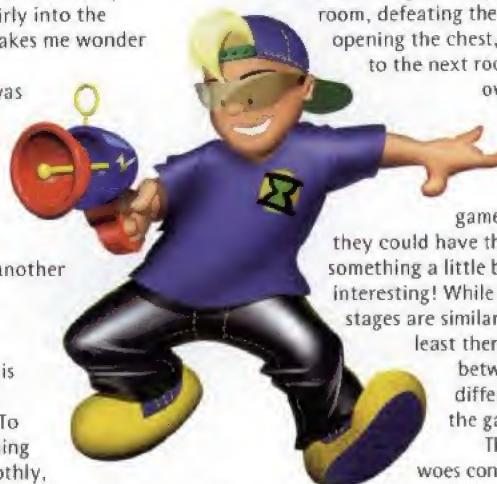
That said, there are some serious problems with the way this game plays. Like *Croc* and *Mario 64*, *Rascal* lets you wander freely throughout the game's 3D environment. There are some problems with the 3D camera positioning behind your polygonal character, however. While the camera angles can get slightly annoying with



'Hopefully this game marks the beginning of a learning curve which leads to some truly excellent games on par with the general standard. Psygnosis maintained with their racing titles'

sometimes run in a circular arc off a platform or right into the path of the enemy you are trying to draw a bead on.

You will also find that the smarmy little homeboy gets stuck in the landscape and is nailed by baddies unfairly into the bargain. It makes me wonder how much playtesting was actually done with this game, or if it was rushed through to become yet another casualty of deadlines. *Rascal's* architecture is also rather uninspiring. To keep everything moving smoothly,



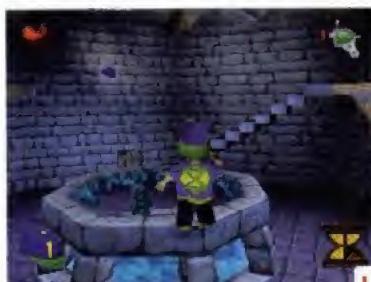
the developers have opted for the 'small but pretty' approach to level design, and this tactic looks like it has resulted in a lot of little rooms which look pretty much the same. Far too much of the game is spent going into a room, defeating the baddie, opening the chest, then going off to the next room to do it all over again. This may increase the longterm value of the

game, but surely they could have thought up something a little bit more interesting! While much of the stages are similar throughout, at least there is variety between the different areas of the game.

The litany of woes continues with the auto map, which is

inadequate. The problem is that you don't know where your character is in a particular room on the map, and thus have to guess which door you are facing or where you are in a maze section. Worse still, some of the maze sections suffer from serious polygon pop-up, and 'cardboard wall' syndrome.

1) Don't jump! 2) "Hi, I'm the Aztec god of Death." 3) & 4) Beanstalks and Battle-axes



1) Look, it's Jolly Roger, and he's after a new cabin boy! 2) A parrot's work is never done

Rascal is obviously intended to appeal to younger gamers, and it is quite possible the game may impress a very young crowd more than it does me. However, when you look at the game in the context of the competition (on and off the PlayStation) I'd just as happily pinch the bastard's cap and shove his sunglasses up somewhere they won't be needed! Even the cheesy American slickness of Gex is preferable to this fat little pomme git!

But as I said, it is a good thing that Psygnosis are keen on diversifying and trying a few new genres. Hopefully this game marks the beginning of a learning curve which leads to some truly excellent games on par with the general standard



Psygnosis has maintained with their racing titles. But for now, the word 'oops' comes to mind.



Alternatives

Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko, Croc: Legend of the Gobbos, Crash Bandicoot 1 or 2, take your pick...

Game Features

Players



Accessories



Overall: *Rascal* may keep the younger players amused but most players will be after something more substantial

6

Newman Haas Racing

■ PUBLISHER: Psygnosis

■ DEVELOPER: Psygnosis US

■ RELEASE: April

■ PRICE: \$79.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: G

The American like to do things in a big way, especially when it comes to their cars. But Adrian Bertram still had trouble fitting in the Indy Cars



With the continuing propensity of the console market towards racing games in general and driving sims in particular, the appearance of a game replicating the thrills of the Indy Car Championship was only a matter of time. These cars may appear to be the larger, clumsier cousins of F1 cars, but the sheer speed at which they travel has ensured their growing popularity among racing fans around the world, and more specifically in America (where many of the tracks are). *Newman Haas Racing* has been put together by Psygnosis in association with Bizarre Creations (who were responsible for the extremely successful F1 games), and while it does have some problems, they've done a good job of replicating the cars, tracks, and most importantly the feel of Indy Car racing.



The Indy Cars are extremely well designed and very authentic, as are the game's tracks

of them, but all the big names like Jimmy Vasser, Scott Pruett and Gil Ferran are present. *Newman Haas Racing* features 10 tracks which range from speedways to circuits and the inevitable bowl. Fortunately, however, there is only one bowl track and unlike some recent games, it's actually a decent track to race on.

In *Newman Haas Racing*, great attention has been paid to both the cars and tracks in terms of accurate presentation, and the graphics are quite tasty with some very fast action occurring without too much of the clipping so prevalent in both F1 games. The temporary street circuits in particular (such as our own Surfer's

Paradise track) have been well duplicated with fine backgrounds, a strong sense of verisimilitude and a ludicrous dedication to detailed reproduction of authentic advertising. With some of these tracks, however, the smoothness of the road texture combined with a generally busy setting can sometimes make it a little difficult to see where the track is heading, though this is usually only a problem with the highly detailed street circuits.

The sound the cars in *Newman Haas Racing* produce is on the whole pretty good, and when there's a few of you lined up screaming down the straight at over 300 km/h, the sound can be deafening. As with F1, *Newman Haas Racing* features a couple of authentic American commentators. While they can be amusing most of the time (they have a go at the race, the drivers, the action and anything else quite regularly), all the usual problems such as badly lagging and heavily repetitive commentary come up.

The way the cars handle in *Newman Haas Racing*, and in fact the whole conceptual approach to driving is an unusual proposition, and depending on your viewpoint, is either the point that sends *Newman Haas Racing* screaming round the bend to take the chequered flag, or sees it limp slowly into the pits only to explode after a run in with the work experience pit crew. In recent times, top end racing sims have





1) The map appears less than well placed 2) Two-player split-screen 3) & 4) Vrrooom!

been concentrating on a more "authentic" style of racing, with greater emphasis on careful driving and braking. Thus, it is unusual to see *Newman Haas Racing* adopt the essentially 'hammer down and forget the brakes' approach. This may well be a true replication of how Indy Car drivers do their business, and it does provide for some fine two-player arcade action, but in the end it's a little unsatisfying.

In observance of this arcade-style approach, you can throw your car all over the place without losing significant speed or placings, and it is possible to keep the throttle fully down and maintain steering even over sand and gravel. Again, whether this is a good or bad thing depends largely on your point of view, but when it becomes easier to spin out into a wall when taking a long fast corner than when you start driving straight over chicanes, you have to start wondering.



While we're on the subject of dings, I have to raise a very annoying point. Whenever you stack into another vehicle (and only another vehicle - this doesn't count for walls, barriers or anything else), the viewpoint zooms out for a few seconds so you can see better what's going on. Unfortunately this happens every time you so much as touch another car, so if you scrape down

the side of a car while you're both taking a corner, the view will zoom in and out with each tiny touch, making it difficult to keep your driving line smooth.

Another annoying thing about *Newman Haas Racing* is the track map. Sure you can (and will) turn it off, but the placement of it is extremely stupid to say the least and with its big, solid black background, it just takes up too much room. These maps aren't really much use anyway, although it's nice to know when the pits are coming up as they aren't really marked, and it can be very easy to enter them by accident.

Control in *Newman Haas Racing* is another thing which will probably raise your hackles. With the no-brake style of racing, you really need highly responsive controls and unfortunately on *Newman Haas Racing*, they're very spongy indeed. Analogue control is supported, and while it does make *Newman Haas Racing* easier to control in the long run, it's nowhere near the sort of precision control you've come to expect from titles like TOCA Touring Cars.

In spite of these problems, however, *Newman Haas Racing* can be a fairly enjoyable racing game - it's just that it's not one of the elite. Most of the tracks are quite entertaining and the action is definitely very fast. Additionally, *Newman Haas Racing* contains a fine two-player mode which includes a field for you to race against. So if you're a huge fan of Indy Car racing or if you're looking for a more arcade style version of F1 '97 (is that possible?), *Newman Haas Racing* may be exactly what you need.



Alternatives

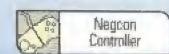
Formula 1 '97 is a far superior game of open wheel racing, and the Platinum re-release of the original F1 is also a more worthwhile purchase

Game Features

Players



Accessories



■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Nice and smooth, good detail
■ SOUND:	★★★	Chunky engine noises, otherwise sparse
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	Problematic, but entertaining enough
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	The challenges are there...
■ PRESENTATION:	★★	Annoying 'wheel' menu system

Overall: *Newman Haas* should be well received by fans of Indy Car and arcade style action, although it's not up to the standard set by *Formula 1*

7

OUT OF TEN

The Adventures of Alundra

■ PUBLISHER: SCEI

■ DEVELOPER: SCEI

■ RELEASE: April

■ PRICE: \$79.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: G

It may not be quite in the same league as FFVII, but Alundra does have the charm that all good RPGs need. The Black Pig put on his hiking boots



With the barnstorming success of Final Fantasy VII, RPGs and associated games are now being taken a lot more seriously by many gamers, and there is absolutely no doubt that we will see an enormous slab of these life consuming games released in the near future. While few will come anywhere near the achievements of FFVII, we can expect to see the genre fully explored and exploited as fans seek a panacea for the emptiness they feel after completing FFVII. The most recent such game to enter the equation is Psygnosis' effort *The Adventures of Alundra*. While at first look it may not appear to be anything remarkable, it quickly becomes quite an entertaining title.

The Adventures of Alundra is a Zelda-style RPG in which you play the part of Alundra, a strange pointy-eared elfin freak who has the ability to enter people's dreams and free them from their nightmares. At the start of the game, you are following the commands of a bizarre dream which leads you by ship to the town of Inoa, a place where the people are strange and their problems even stranger. You have to help them out, go on quests - all the usual things you'd expect from an RPG.

In *Alundra*, fighting plays a lesser role than in most RPGs, and in line with



1 & 2) The presentation in *Alundra* is true to the game 3) "Hi, do you mind if I take that?"

the Zelda style, turn-based combat is replaced by wandering around and stabbing at things with your sword. Sometimes this style can seem a little basic and somewhat repetitive, but in taking the main focus away from combat, the game is opened up a little in terms of objectives. While you still have to fight beasties all the time,

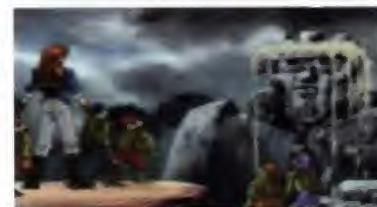
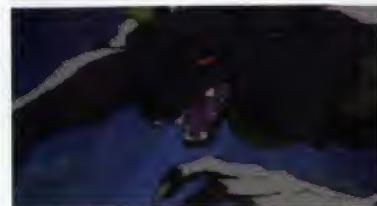


3) Vertus is right. The tree that was blocking the bridge is gone.

Alundra is based more around solving puzzles and indulging in some platform tomfoolery. This may not sound like the most interesting thing in the world, but

once you get into the style of the game, it becomes quite immersive and you'll slip into that "Whoops it's 4am and I have to work tomorrow" scenario that





Although the graphics in *Alundra* don't appear to be anything special, the game is thoroughly enjoyable and great deal of fun

only comes with a quality RPG.

The difference between a good and bad RPG is always the plot. If the plot is boring or in some way shoddy, the game is really going to struggle to keep your attention. Fortunately, *Alundra* has a fine plot and, in a move almost unheard of in an RPG, the characters in *Alundra* are actually blessed with a wacky sense of humour. *Alundra* is set in that sort of fantasy-type world all RPGs seem to be set in, but the unusual characters and plot help it escape from the usual grind. I don't really want to spoil any of the game, but when a title features a bizarre valley surfer dude as a major character, you know something a bit weird is going on. Anyway, it's a good thing that *Alundra* has a good plot and character design, as some of its other production values are a little weak.

In terms of graphic presentation, well... FFVII it ain't. Looking more like the nicest looking 16-bit title you've ever seen, *Alundra* has a similar sort of look to it as games such as *Suikoden* or *The Secret of Mana* from the SNES. Once you're engrossed in the action



though, this doesn't really matter so much, as the action is still all nice and clear. Where the animation is an issue, it's usually handled quite decently, although some bosses are a little stodgy looking. There are some occasional flashy effects for spells and such, but it's fairly basic in appearance. Similarly, the sound effects in *Alundra* are quite spartan, and while some of the music is kind of cool, the majority of it is the worst sort of Japanese cheese known to man.

In terms of actual play, *Alundra* follows the *Zelda* model very closely, right down to hacking up small bushes to get items. The action takes place in various platform/dungeon levels that are located both in the real world and in other people's minds - where the main emphasis is on jumping hither and thither - as well as the outside world where you spend most of your time walking around talking to people and advancing the plot in general. When you first begin to play, the puzzles aren't that tough and it's fairly easy to know where you're supposed to be going. But after not very long, the puzzles start to get more involved and your objectives become

less obvious, so you'll have to exercise your brain as well.

Alundra is not without its problems though, and some of them are a real hassle. One problem concerns the way you buy items. You pick up the desired item in a store, throw it on the desk and have a chat with the shopkeep. He tells you how much it is, you decide whether or not you want it, he thanks you either way and off you go. The problem is that you can't buy multiple items at once, so if you want to buy five of an item, you have to keep repeating the procedure. Five intensely boring times.

The second problem with *Alundra* is the fact that this will have a very specific audience. For all of *Alundra*'s solid plot, nice touches and quirky character, it's one of those games that's not for everyone. I found myself

getting into it, but the relentless platform action in particular might turn some RPG fans off, and some people may not be able to stand its sometimes frustrating action at all. However, if you're familiar with these sort of RPGs, or think *Alundra* sounds like your cup of tea, you'll find it to be a highly entertaining and addictive title that will keep you going for quite a while.



Final Fantasy VII

Alternatives

Konami's *Suikoden* is a similar style of game, but *Final Fantasy VII* remains the Mother of all RPGs

Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories



Memory Card

Standard Controller

Overall: If you're into RPGs then you'd be foolish to pass up *The Adventures Of Alundra*. Just don't expect it to be of FFVII calibre

8

OUT OF TEN

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Nothing special, but pretty enough
■ SOUND:	★★	At best it's not bad, at worst it's just not
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Quite deep and intriguing
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★	Not massive, but will take time
■ PRESENTATION:	★★★	Classic 16-bit Japanese RPG style

Bust A Move 3

■ PUBLISHER: Acclaim

■ DEVELOPER: Taito

■ RELEASE: TBA

■ PRICE: TBA

■ CLASSIFICATION: G

Cute puzzle games are making a comeback led by the third edition of the popular arcade Bust A Move series. Amos Wong's eyes glazed over in anticipation!

How do you update a classic puzzle game? Taito's strategy seems to be mainly in the cosmetic department. *Bust a Move 3* is the latest addition to incredibly cute and addictive games that involve getting rid of bubbles, gems, blobs and what-not. Like Taito's recent Japan-only

puzzle effort, *Psychic Force Puzzle Taisen*, a new cast of characters now supplement the world of *Bust A Move*. There's a superhero-esque guy from the punching game at the arcades some of you might recognise. Also in the cast are a bunch of cute girls from a 'mah-jong game' and 'quiz game' as well as what looks like SF2 Ryu's younger brother!

For the uninitiated, the object of the game is to clear the ceiling of bubbles before they grind down to 'ground level'. This is done by firing up a coloured bubble to match the colour of a cluster above. A clump of three or more of the same colour will disappear and the trick is to clear the screen before time runs out. The colour arrangement that looms above gets progressively more complex and trickier to clear the more stages you clear.

1) & 2) Two-player mode adds serious fun to *Bust-a-Move 3*



'Typically, you're soon compelled to clear the screen no matter what, and consequently a quick couple of rounds to pass a few spare minutes' simply does not exist!'









Official Australian
PlayStation
RESIDENT EVIL 2 by Capcom





Aside from the classic arcade and two-player battle modes, a Challenge mode takes a player through several stages. It doesn't matter if you pass or fail them, after each round you're given a rating on how well you've performed. When all the stages have been played through, a teacher/master person gives you an overall assessment on your bubble popping skills. For the true fanatic, an edit mode enables you to create your own stages of bubble mayhem and a whole bunch of custom stages can be played in the custom mode.

Needless to say, many stages across the single player modes are total brain teasers that awaken your latent obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Bubbles can now be bounced off the ceiling to get to some very tricky bubbles stuck above floating blocks that you can't pop, but they'll disappear upon zapping the bubbles stuck to them. Typically, you're soon compelled to clear the screen no matter what, and consequently 'a quick couple of rounds to pass a few spare minutes' simply does not exist! But, like any puzzle game, at its core *Bust a Move 3* really scores with the two-player head-to-head mode. In these games the better you do, the more bubbles you send over to your opponent. This causes much laughing and, um, 'colourful banter' to be exchanged between the parties involved and for a game, that can only be a good thing.

So is it worth buying? Sure it is; there are very few games that squeeze out a maximum amount of playability from a simple premise and graphic style. *Bust a Move 3* is one of them. If

1) One player fun 2) "Taste the might of my bubble launcher, little girl." 3) Bonus puzzle



Comment

What is it with kooky games and me? They keep turning up in my life, yet I've got to say, I love them!

I had never played any of the previous *Bust A Move* games, either on console or arcade, so I wasn't sure what to expect. I was blown away by the cuteness at first. Something to do with the fact that the characters are little dinosaurs, schoolgirls, good-looking witches and cute card sharks, I guess. But I hadn't expected to find the gameplay so damnable addictive!

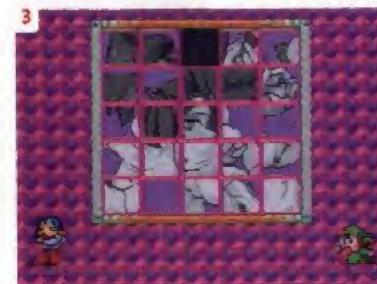
I found the two-player competitions to be the most fun from my perspective. Not only do you have to worry about blasting your own bubbles, but the other player can send some your way if you're not careful. Also it's not just a matter of clearing your own screen, you've got to keep ahead of your opponent at all times. The other thing that I appreciated is the way any bubbles held in place by being connected to bubbles that have just been blasted appear on your opponent's screen. With practice and a keen eye, you can soon send plenty of trouble the other player's way, and this soon becomes the most fun objective!

Single player is just as enjoyable, only a little less hectic. I was quite taken with the mode that allowed you to choose an opening bubble pattern that needed to be wiped out. The time bonus component gives that one an extra edge. Similarly, the option to do a progressive game, gradually taking on each character, was impressive - if only for the reason that it lets you see all of the characters' cute little battle cries and tantrums at the bottom of the screen!

All in all I was surprised at how enjoyable a puzzle game could be on the PlayStation. I had never really played anything like it, but once I had started I really didn't want to stop. If you've avoided cute puzzle games simply because they are cute puzzle games, I urge you to give *Bust A Move* a chance and you'll soon be converted.

- Nic

you don't have it and you love puzzle games, you must check it out. Is it worth buying if you've already got the previous version? It depends. Sure, there are new characters, but they're



not half as interesting or cute as the ones in *Psychic Force Puzzle Taisen* or *Puyo Puyo* if that's what you're after. There's been a bit of a gameplay refinement and the graphics do look crisper, but it's still basically the same game as before. If only Taito had included a multi-player elimination game à la *Puyo Puyo Sun*, this would've instantly become an essential purchase. As it is, the real decision is whether you're addicted enough to create your own levels. If the answer is yes, *Bust a Move 3* will take your obsession to new heights. Otherwise, weigh up whether the extras really make a difference for you.



Alternatives

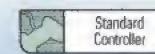
Puyo Puyo is a brilliant Tetris variant that has become a classic in its own right

Game Features

Players



Accessories



Overall:

Bust a Move 3 is nevertheless lots of fun and still one of the best puzzle games around.

8

OUT OF TEN

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	They do the job
■ SOUND:	★★★★	More voice samples, crisper music
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	You gotta love it!
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Two-player fun will never die!
■ PRESENTATION:	★★	Nice and simple, but slow loading

Brahma Force: Assault on Beltlogger 9

■ PUBLISHER: GT

■ DEVELOPER: Genki

■ RELEASE: Available Now

■ PRICE: TBA

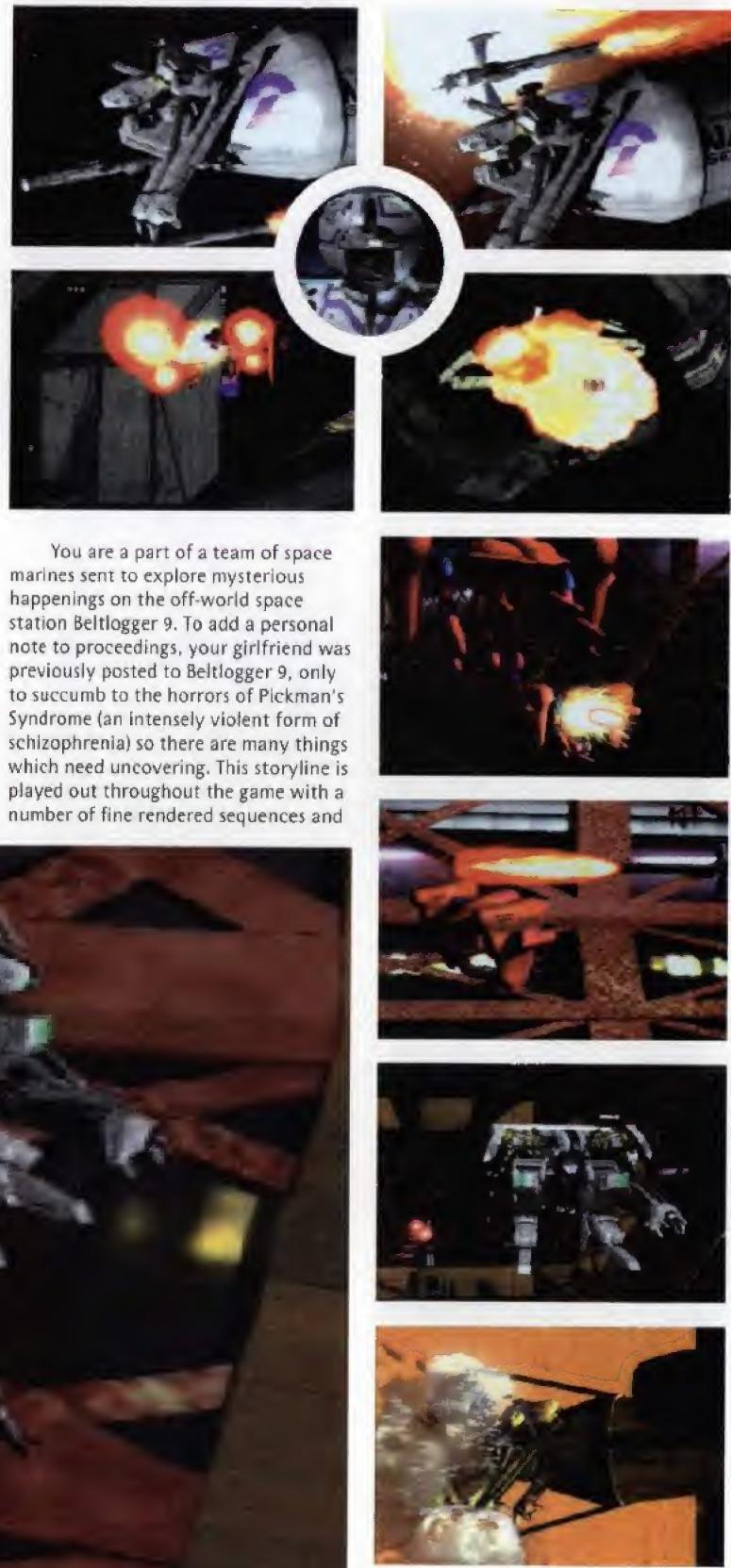
■ CLASSIFICATION: TBA

Assault on Beltlogger 9. The Black Pig goes on a guiltless spree of gluttony resulting in his belt buckle giving way at the dining table

You don't have to be a genius to realise that there are more than a few *Doom* clones wandering around these days. In addition, we've now come to the point where there are also an enormous number of *Doom* variants circling like vultures over the slowly rotting corpse of your devastated wallet. The latest such variant to enter the equation is Genki's *Brahma Force*, a mech-based *Doom*-clone of sorts. It promises to have deeper gameplay, better this and that, and so on, but don't all new games say that these days?

Brahma Force's developers were also responsible for both the lamentable *Kileak the Blood* and the decidedly mediocre *Epidemic*, so why should you expect this to be any better? Well, *Brahma Force* does succeed in surpassing these previous ventures, through a more involved approach than the traditional shoot everything in sight and collect the keys style. In its place, *Brahma Force* presents an interesting concoction of *Doom*, mech and platform elements, with an evolving storyline thrown in for good measure.

'To help you in your mission you are placed behind the controls of a BRAHMA unit which is quite a nifty looking mech with a great deal of weaponry and some interesting abilities.'



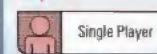
You are a part of a team of space marines sent to explore mysterious happenings on the off-world space station Beltlogger 9. To add a personal note to proceedings, your girlfriend was previously posted to Beltlogger 9, only to succumb to the horrors of Pickman's Syndrome (an intensely violent form of schizophrenia) so there are many things which need uncovering. This storyline is played out throughout the game with a number of fine rendered sequences and

Penetrating highly defended space-stations might sound like a lark, but trust us - it's not



Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories



Memory Card



Standard Controller

There's a certain alien darkness to the atmosphere of *Brahma Force*, which is helped by the highly industrial-inspired backgrounds and levels. Remember: it's just you against a space-station full of killer robots.



Alternatives

Epidemic was the predecessor to this game, but you should also check out *Mechwarrior 2* or wait for *Armoured Core*.



of platform games, and this helps to give a greater freedom of movement. Objectives in *Brahma Force* are, for the most part, fairly traditional stuff: flip switches, get keys, kill things, get to the next level. However, the interesting layout of some of the levels keeps it fairly entertaining, although there's still maybe a little bit too much wandering around for my liking.

One of the things that keeps interest levels up throughout the game is the plot and the way it unfolds. While a large portion of the story is spelled out in FMVs at key moments or between levels, there is a lot of other

while Genki are still having a few troubles with their dubbing, the overall quality in terms of production and content makes these scenes quite entertaining. To help you in your mission you are placed behind the controls of a BRAHMA unit (Bipedal Robotic Assault Heavy Mechanised Armour) which is quite a nifty looking mech with a great deal of weaponry and some interesting abilities. On arrival most of your force is wiped out and, surprise surprise, it comes down to you versus an army of mechanised monstrosities led by the inevitable villain Dionisio Vega (who sounds more like a rejected Street Fighter character).

The action in *Brahma Force* takes place over 22 levels and, unlike most Doom clones, these levels contain some nice big wide open areas combined with more traditional corridors and rooms. These areas also contain levels at various heights in a look reminiscent

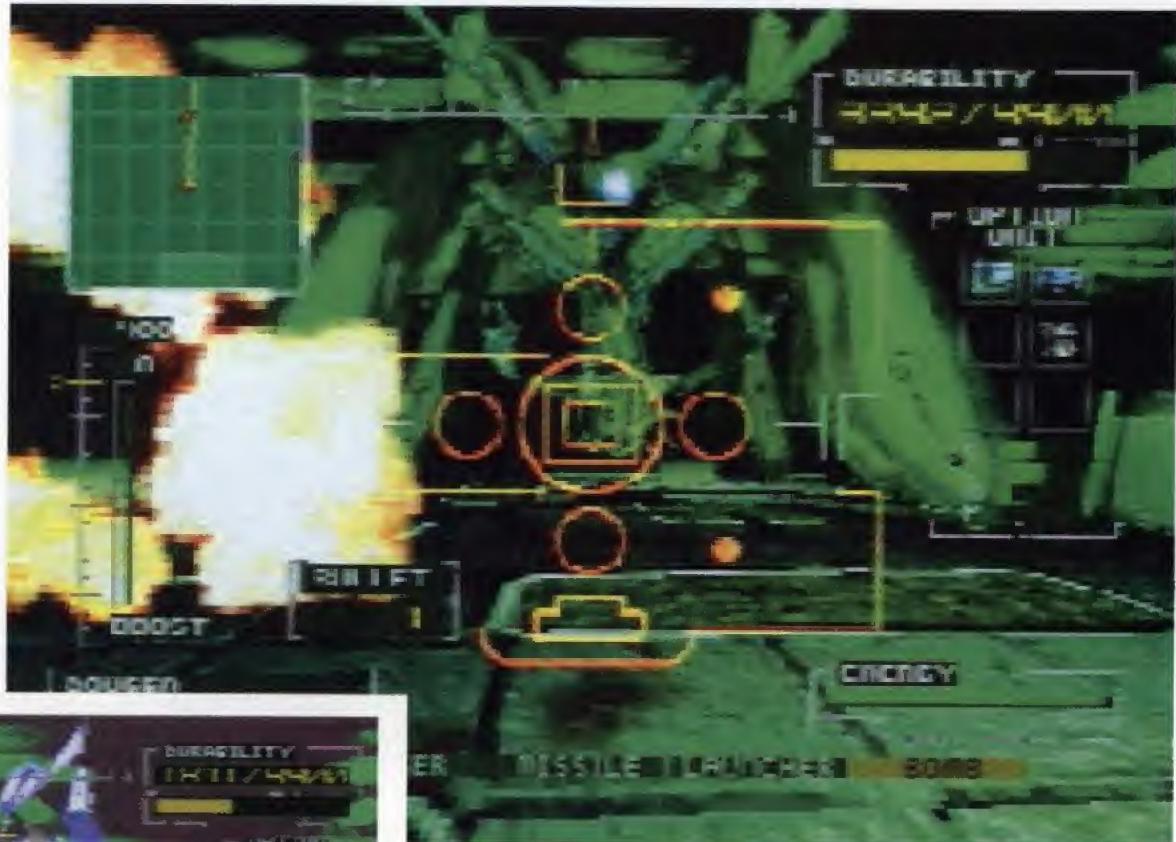
information that you must retrieve from the abandoned computer terminals on the Beltlogger station. This information takes the form of further FMVs, as well as com transmissions, log reports and so on. Sure, the plot isn't the most remarkably original thing you've come across (I can think of several sci-fi moves with essentially the same plot), but this method of slowly unravelling the plot is more immersive than just getting it in big chunks every

now and then.

In terms of the actual gameplay, *Brahma Force* really is quite a barnyard oddity. While the combination of first-person shooter, mech-sim and 3D platform elements is interesting in theory, in practice it leads to a somewhat disjointed experience. In terms of the *Doom* elements, BF may not impress fans of the original. Your mech is quite sluggish (albeit with a nice lurching



motion) and enemies can be quite tough to kill. This game is not about wading in guns blazing, strafing until everyone's dead, as this practice will see you quickly eliminated. Rather a more tactical approach (via the tasty 3D maps) is required. Also in BF, the enemies just keep coming, wave after wave, so it's not possible to wipe out the inhabitants of a level and then deal with your objectives. So instead of just walking into an area and opening up it's more sensible to keep an eye out for opponents on your radar and pick them off as required.



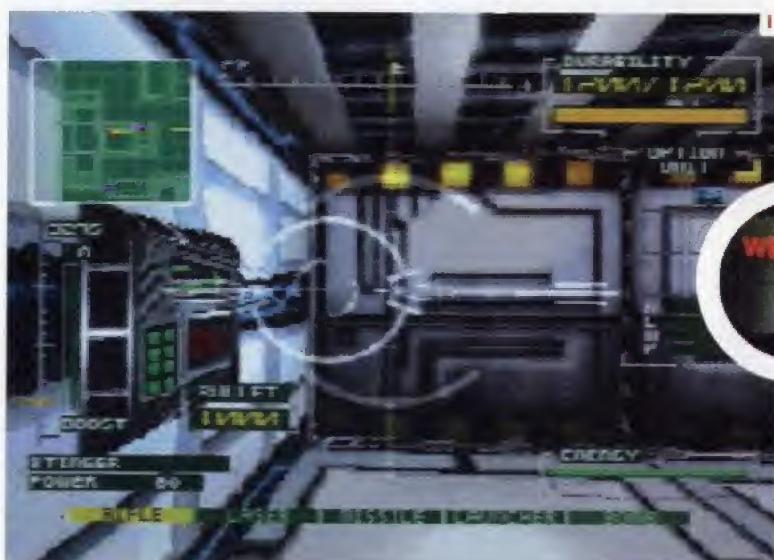
The mech elements in BF are actually quite successful, and manifest themselves primarily in the way in which you must control the upkeep and

improvement of your mech. Instead of instantly using power-ups the moment you walk over them, power-ups collected in BF are stored for use at

your discretion. These include health, energy, bombs, weapon power-ups (with extra weapons concealed throughout the game) and so forth. The mech style management of these power-ups works quite successfully and gives you a greater freedom in deciding how you want your mech to progress.

In *Brahma Force* your mech can also execute a short jump, and thus the platform element is introduced. At first this jump is only really used to access second floors of buildings and the like, but after a while you get to some nasty

- 1) The new IKEA Kitchen
- 2) Power-ups can be collected and stored for later use
- 3) Communication screen's will provide much needed information

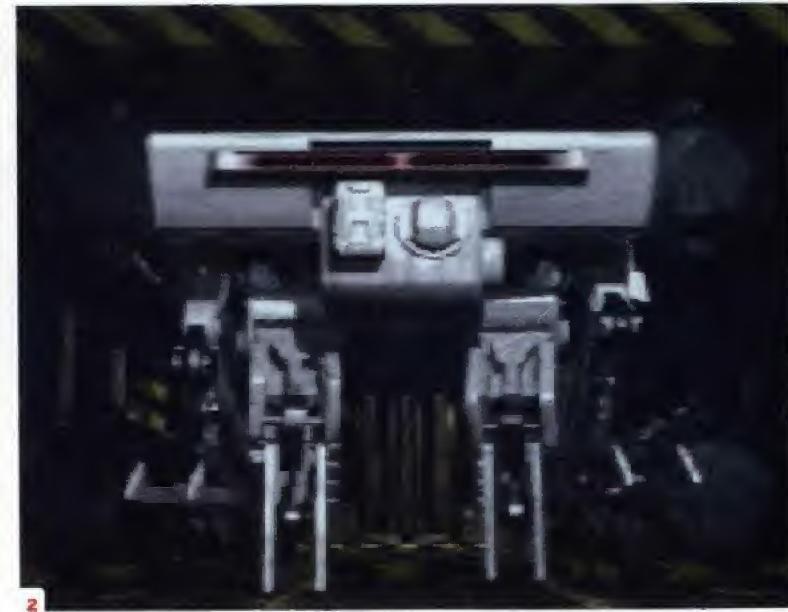


The night vision screens do wonders for the overall creepiness of *Brahma Force* - especially when you're trying to hold it together while battling a bloody great boss robot!

floating platform action. Most of these platform sequences are easily dealt with, but on some levels the platforms featured are small and often moving or falling. You'll soon be realising why it's usually only small furry animals that usually hop about on these things and not 30 tonne mechs. When you're jumping from platform to platform it can be very difficult to see where you're going and while you look down at where you're going (much like Jumping Flash), this doesn't tend to help too much. Additionally, your foes need only nudge you (even with your shields up and no damage caused) and you'll be knocked off the edge to fall ever downwards

Throughout *Brahma Force* Genki has done a reasonable job of creating an atmosphere appropriate to an abandoned colony. No, the graphics aren't that spectacular and the enemies are sometimes indistinct, but the feel is sort of there. Once you pass level 10 and you get into the residential sections





1) & 2) The cut scenes give a sense of the sheer enormity of the station and your task. 3), 4) & 5) Collect info and weapons, but don't die

the look is a bit more interesting, but overall it's fairly dark and grey. The sound, however is one of the game's strongest points. The sounds of your mech and all its weapons are nicely done and instead of full blown music, most of the time you get merely atmospheric effects. This is far more desirable than dodgy techno, and when your radar starts beeping incessantly you will get a bit worked up, almost like

the bits in the Alien films with the motion tracker. For extra fun, hook up your stereo and turn it up. The sound of your steel feet hitting the hard floors should reduce your neighbours to pools of jelly and the dougen bomb will quite possibly blow your speakers!



Brahma Force Comment

The trick with these sort of games ('realistic' 3D adventures) is getting the atmosphere just right, so that the player is drawn into the game's world and becomes one with the playing environment. This may sound a bit arty-farty, but it's true - just look at how games like Tomb Raider or Doom suck you in to the exclusion of everything else going on around you.

Graphically, *Brahma Force* doesn't look great. To a casual observer, the HUD combined with the sharp angular look of much of the levels can really look messy, but it's a different story when you're actually playing it. The way the levels are structured offers a challenging variety of scenarios to negotiate, and the masses of enemies out to get you ensures the pace is kept up - not quite frantic, but you certainly don't have time to admire the architecture at your leisure. This gives a sense of purpose to your missions and encourages you to get the job done without too much fuss.

The other half of the equation required to make this game work well is the often neglected soundtrack. Rather than slap in a repetitive beat, *Brahma Force* uses realistic-sounding effects and ambient noises to keep you on edge. This works quite well in this game, and adds to the overall mood of the game.

Brahma Force isn't going to set the world on fire, but it's certainly a good effort and worth considering while we wait for Metal Gear Solid to arrive.

- Andrew



When you first look at the menu systems for managing your mech, it may all seem a little too much, but with the gentle learning curve you will have plenty of time to get used to it. The first few levels in BF are almost stupidly easy, giving you a chance to familiarise at first before the heavy stuff starts, and it does get quite nasty.

While definitely not a classic, *Brahma Force*'s unusual combination of gameplay elements make it an interesting prospect. In the end however, fans of its separate elements will probably go back to their specific games, as the combination can become a bit wearying (especially the platform elements). It is a vast improvement on Epidemic and could be what you're looking for, although it may not take long to complete.

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	A bit indistinct, but good design
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Turn it up!
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	A mixed bag, not to everyone's taste
■ LIFESPAN:	★★	Moderately tough, but too short
■ PRESENTATION:	★★★	Initially daunting, but well laid out

■ Overall: An ambitious mix of styles, *Brahma Force* is a decent first-person shooter that should keep you engrossed for a while

Z

■ PUBLISHER: SCE

■ DEVELOPER: GTI

■ RELEASE: Available Now

■ PRICE: \$59.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: M15

Fans of strategy games rejoice! Another old PC game has finally made the transition to your favourite console so we sent Steve Polak to the front line

It is time to command and conquer all over again, as Z (another C&C clone) appears on the horizon. Z is actually a game of a similar vintage to the legendary C&C, in that the developers first started work on it at about the same time as Westwood began developing C&C. However, problems in



its development held the release of Z back to the point where it has only recently become available, even after *Red Alert* (C&C's successor) has made it to the PlayStation.

So has the long wait been worth it? Well, the answer for strategy fans isn't

that simple. Like the original PC game, Z is a pretty good example of a real time strategy game (RTS), but unfortunately the game has lost a bit of its gloss in the transition from PC to the console.

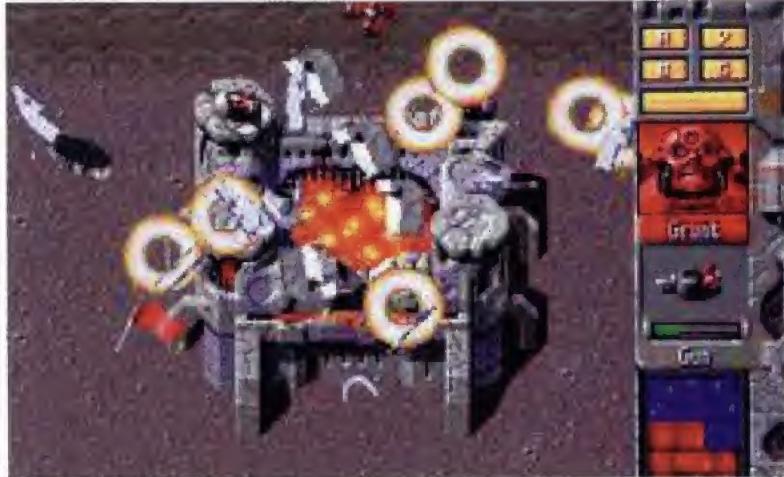
Just as the name the game is short on letters, the game itself is pretty short

Hey, what happened to Asimov's Three Laws?

on plot. All you know is that you control one of the two robot armies, and that you must destroy your enemy, but that is about it. Z also loses marks because you cannot play as either of the sides, therefore the 20 missions on offer can only be played as the red robot clan. This is a real let down after *Red Alert* which came with two discs, one for each warring side.

However, even though I have started out on a couple sour notes, Z does have a few things going for it if you are into this particular kind of strategy game. Firstly, there are heaps of different troop and vehicle types. Tanks, missile launchers, artillery, jeeps,

you name it; and at least six different troop types help keep the gameplay varied. Each unit has its Achille's heel, so you must learn to balance out your forces so you're not wiped out. And you will still want to use at least five different types, even after you have the



Although the top-down view is necessary for strategy games, Z does not use the full graphic potential of the PlayStation, leaving it looking somewhat dated.

and play carefully and defensively, nine times out of 10 you will cop a real belting and become over-run before you know what's happening. This means you have to play Z in a very aggressive manner, and the opening stages of any battle are usually a mad sprint for territory which you then try to cling to with the resilience of a rabies infested pit bull. After these initial skirmishes, the computer tries to cut you down with a number of focused counter strikes in force (much better than the suicidally stupid lone tank attacks in



'So even though Z finishes clearly behind Warcraft and Red Alert as far as the PlayStation versions go, it does manage to outperform the original Command & Conquer'

facilities to produce the most powerful units. Success is often determined simply by having a greater number and variety of soldiers and equipment than the other side.

Combat in Z is harder than an amorous bronco bull's balls. The game is strongly driven by your success or failure in combat. As you conquer new territories and your empire grows, you are rewarded by taking control of all the factories on this newly liberated land. This allows you to build more units at a faster rate, thus spurring on your mighty conquest of the infidels. Onward and upward! Your productive capacity is also influenced by the amount of land you own, so the game is best played in an attacking mode. In fact, if you try to conserve your forces

Command & Conquer), so you really must get your army entrenched as soon as possible.

In Z's favour, the combat driven gameplay can be very satisfying once you get the hang of it. Like Ghengis Khan, you can sweep through your foes like a hot knife through butter, laying waste to all in your path. However, the



fact that you have to attack fast and give your troops orders really quickly (remembering that the computer can order all of its troops simultaneously), it quickly becomes apparent that the sluggish joypad interface is an absolute waste of time. So just in case you haven't guessed, I am yet again saying with this kind of game you really must have a mouse to get the most enjoyment out of it, as there's nothing worse than losing because you couldn't do what you wanted to fast enough because of interface limitations.

That said, if you want a tough strategy game and you do have a mouse, Z is a lot of fun. Successful scenarios are also punctuated by some really funny animated segues, which

depict two of your soldiers - Wayne and Brad - being absolute hoons (drinking rocket fuel lager and driving like maniacs in their space cargo ship).

But at the end of the day, the game could have been better. Graphically, Z is not as advanced as the technology could allow and looks really dated next to newer 3D strategy games like Total Annihilation on the PC. The game also takes forever to load up scenarios, which adds to the game's overall dated appearance.

So even though Z finishes clearly behind Warcraft and Red Alert as far as the PlayStation versions go, it does manage to outperform the original *Command & Conquer*. Strategy fans who have finished the other two games should give it a look, but the rest of you should probably give Warcraft a go first.



Alternatives

C&C, Red Alert, Warcraft, Warhammer

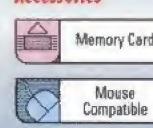
Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories



Overall: Not quite as good as it could have been, but worth a look for seasoned warmongers

7

Vs.

■ PUBLISHER: THQ

■ DEVELOPER: THQ

■ RELEASE: April

■ PRICE: TBA

■ CLASSIFICATION: M15

Pimps, rappers, exchange students and assorted low-life make up the cast of this beat 'em up, but **Hillous** was too cool for all of them

This game is huge. It makes me wonder where developers find the time to keep coming up with these enormous feats of programming genius. Not that Vs. is perfect - no game is (except maybe *WipeOut 2097*) - but it has more than enough realistic and non-realistic violence to please the old and young alike. Having



command of just three attack buttons simplifies the fighting and grants the game incredible responsiveness. It also features a new button no fighter has ever had before! The calling card of Vs. has to be its cast of young urban hipsters comprising the turf gangs in the game. The back of the box calls them "real people who've learned to fight 'cause they had to". I call them slack-jawed, unwashed, loud-mouthed, uncouth youth. One of the homey chicks is absolutely disgraceful - you can see her underpants - and Slim Daddy the pimp with his 'Beach Slap' - what were the character

- 1) Taxi Driver Vs Pimp
- 2) That's one principal who's had enough
- 3) Use the Evade button to save your skin
- 4) Disco Inferno
- 5) Teep!



designers thinking?!!

The plot is based on turf wars between four gangs, each with four members and their own bit of turf in the town. The Campus gang is a schoolgirl, an exchange student, a cheerleader and the principal. Most of



the 'Hood gang wear oversized trousers. All 16 personalities are distinct and unique, each given their very own vanity. The only bad point to these dudes is their blocky appearance. All of the polygons that comprise them are too clean-cut and straight. However, the game engine flows at a super smooth rate, and this coupled with the lifelike movement of the characters turns the blockiness gripe into a petty whinge. When the people move convincingly and the gameplay is as fun in its simplicity as in Vs., one learns to see past the square figures and shallow textures. The joy to be had here is well within reach.

In a rare step towards reality in the beat 'em up field, there is no jump function in Vs. Combatants have it out on the ground, like the rest of us here



on Earth. No monkey-man leapfrogging 20 feet overhead with the intent of using your body as a trampoline, no flying kicks, and no dragon punches (phew!). There's just you and the other guy, and four buttons to choose from: Punch, Kick, Evade & Special Attack.

With only one Punch and Kick, each button carries a truckload of possible functions, depending on the directional buttons. For example, with Mia (the homey girl with the exposed underwear), forward and punch is a normal hit. Down and forward and Punch is the Hammerhead. Down and Punch is a low punch. Forward, forward, Punch is a shoulder ram. Thus each key does



the job of six. Combos are performed by panicking and whacking every button at once. Pressing triangle will initiate the basic Special Attack, but it is lots more fun to hammer the buttons randomly for amazing combinations - there are hundreds!

The blocking is traditionally backwards for high attacks, and crouch and back for low ones. All blows are either high, mid, or low, and the correct blocking position must be assumed to receive each kind of attack. All high attacks are defeated by the automatic block option as in *Tekken 2* and *Toshinden 3*, and almost any attack can be evaded if you hit the button at precisely the right time, just before the hit connects.

Evade and Punch pressed simultaneously initiates grappling. Different things can be done to opponents in a grapple, resulting in a wild throw or a broken limb. Also, people can be grabbed from behind or the side, adding to the depth of trouble they've gone to in order that

Mia hangs with her somewhat unfortunate pack of homeys, including Vikram and Slim



we may appreciate these fantastic new pains a week or two longer.

I totally dig the vibes in this one, folks. Half gritty techno and half upbeat ska (now there's a interesting mix!), the music really lifts your spirits, no matter how much you're getting your arse kicked. As they're all fully versed and lyrical, the tunes also provide a real social drift, as though it's a pub brawl or a fight at the school athletics carnival. One or two of the eight tracks are a bit seedy, but they're predominantly party music.

The biff noises are as to be expected: thoroughly acceptable, but eventually repetitive. THQ have, however, gone to the effort of recording different voices for all of the 16 characters for when they get hit around or win a bout. The bone-crunching effects are very rewarding as well in those brutal locks and holds.

Vs. has it all as far as fist-fights go, and is packed so full of moves that anyone could still be playing this semi-precious gem into the next millennium. If you don't own any beat 'em ups, this would be a perfect choice for a first, but it may pay to check out *Tobal No. 1*, *Tekken 2* and *Soul Blade* before rushing in. Whatever your preference, with its astounding speed and punch-packing potential, *Vs.* is sure not to disappoint.

1) Bzzzt! 2) "Where's my money, fool?"
3) & 4) The combat stages are well designed



Alternatives

Other good fighting games to look out for include Bloody Roar, Masters of Teras Kasi and the imminent Platinum re-release of Soul Blade

Game Features

Players



Accessories



■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Clear and crisp - a little too crisp
■ SOUND:	★★★★	LOVE the songs
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	So easy, and so fast
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Sixteen juvenile delinquents to master
■ PRESENTATION:	★★★	Young and hip!

■ Overall: A fun, fresh and funky fighting game that, despite its limited depth, proves to be quite enjoyable and well worth a look for beat 'em up fans

8

OUT OF TEN

X-Men: Children of the Atom

■ PUBLISHER: Acclaim

■ DEVELOPER: Capcom

■ RELEASE: March

■ PRICE: \$89.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: M15

2D fighting games are fast becoming a dying breed, but good ones still pop up from time to time. Nic Healey takes a look at the latest arcade conversion

I never really got into the Street Fighter series of games and all its associated spin-offs. Even when they were in the arcade, I was always strangely drawn to other games, like shuttle-puck and *Operation Thunderbolt* (it was the Uzi that did it for me). But when I was a bit younger

Cyclops, Wolverine, etc) and bad mutants (a general variety of villains: Spiral, Red Samurai, even a Sentinel robot, which I guess isn't a mutant, so, erm, they're not all muties. Damn). Of course, during the game everyone gets to do battle with everyone else, so the distinctions are pretty meaningless.

The graphics in *X-Men: Children of the Atom* are what we've come to expect from a Capcom fighter. Big chunky sprites, comic

- 1) Unfortunately, even the best combo is no match for an impressive dodge 2) The face of evil 3) Colossus demonstrates his patented spine-breaker move



3



1

book based characters, and insanely fast-paced moves and motion. As always, punches and kicks result in furious, flashes of effects, with the variety of deadly combos usually lighting up the whole screen in an

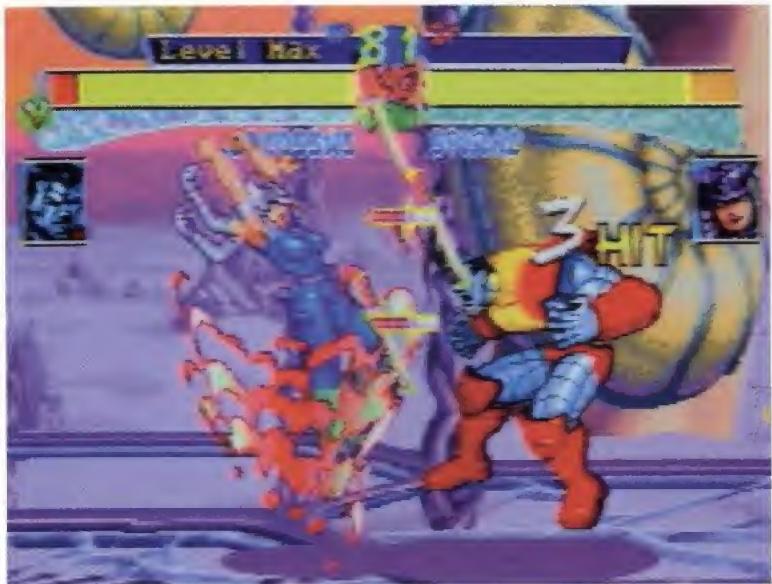
orgiastic display of destruction. Unfortunately, Capcom has dropped the frame rate slightly from the arcade version, to assist in the conversion of the game to the PlayStation. So if you were a huge fan

(not much, mind you), I was one hell of a fan of the X-Men comics (this was before I discovered the Vertigo titles), so I was quite interested in checking out Capcom's latest arcade to PlayStation conversion, *X-Men: Children of the Atom*.

Just in case you didn't know, *X-Men: Children of the Atom* is your classic fighting game, with two characters from the world of the X-Men duking it out on a variety of stages set in the Marvel Universe. The characters are loosely broken up into good mutants (the X-Men: Colossus,

'Punches and kicks result in furious flashes of effects, with the variety of deadly combos usually lighting up the whole screen in an orgiastic display of destruction'





of the arcade game, be prepared for a very slight reduction in the smoothness of the animation. However, the action is so fast, with just so much happening on screen, that only the most devoted fan (and pedantic gamer) is going to be bothered by the difference.

Although the backgrounds are usually quite unimportant in a fighting game, I kept getting distracted by how good they looked in *X-Men: Children of*

the Atom. They seemed so rich and interesting as compared to the rather ordinary battle stages. Mojo's head watching the fighting on Mojo World amused me no end, as did the entirely unnecessary aquatic holographics produced by the Danger Room at X-Men headquarters (with Professor Charles Xavier watching in the background). There is also a good level of character interaction with the backgrounds - in Mojo World the platforms give way during a fight, dropping you to lower and lower levels, and you'll find that pylons and support beams will crash, crumble and generally go flying if you get knocked against them.

- 1) Take that, you Japanese stereotype!
- 2) Oh look, another combo! 3) They're just so uncanny!



As for sound effects, it's the usual selection of flesh-on-flesh thumps and crunches, as well as weird noises intended to imply powers that defy reason and inspire fear - or something like that.

One feature that really appeals, even though it's quite minor, is the signature move of each character after a win - like Wolverine throwing his head back and having a good, hard victory scream, or Iceman spelling his



name out in ice and leaning back against it. They're small details, but they still seem to add a bit of fun to the game.

I guess if I had one complaint it would be have to be the combos. I realise that they're important - hell, the whole intro sequence seems to be dedicated to letting you know how important they are. It kept flashing up screens with inspirational messages even the Scientologists would be proud of: "Learn the combos," "Combos are the key." The point is that human players are obviously going to have trouble hitting the 16 button mega-hit combo, while a computer player isn't. In fact, I kept getting hammered senseless by the computer pulling off some insanely damaging move while I was still trying to press every button at the same time. The best I fared against the computer was when I just mashed the control pad continuously - beat Cyclops into a bloody pulp, actually. It was vastly satisfying.

For my money, *X-Men: Children of the Atom* works best as a two player game, where the only advantages are individual experience and skill. Played that way, it's a damn funky beat 'em up, that has good long term potential.



- 1) Learn the combos 2) What the...?! 3) Mighty big beam you've got there, boy 4) Mighty big balls you've... 5) Go grrr!



Alternatives

The obvious alternative has to be any of the Street Fighter II games, and Marvel Super Heroes is also quite similar

Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories



Memory Card



Standard Controller

Overall: It's a fun game, but it looks a lot like any other Capcom fighter. Still more than worth a look if that's your thing

7

OUT OF TEN

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	Not as smooth as some, but still good
■ SOUND:	★★★	Scream! Thump! Smash!
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★	A bit same old, same old after a while
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Many mutants to master
■ PRESENTATION:	★★	Kind of ordinary

Actua Ice Hockey

■ PUBLISHER: Gremlin

■ DEVELOPER: Gremlin

■ RELEASE: Available now

■ PRICE: TBA

■ CLASSIFICATION: G

Still numb from last month's look at big boofy bloke ice ballet, Adrian Bertram swings his stick at another pucking game

As mentioned in last issue's round up of NHL games, ice hockey has always been a sport that translates well onto consoles: with fast action and molto violence it would seem hard to go wrong. Thus, it's truly like getting slapped in the face with a brick when you come across a game that fails to deliver so comprehensively as *Actua Ice Hockey*.

So where does Actua go astray? By far the biggest problem is the animation and motion. The graphics are fairly reasonable, when no one's moving, and the screen shots here probably don't seem too bad. The problem is that the motion is way too jerky. If you haven't quite got the point, the action in this game is about as fluid as the Gobi Desert. Add to this a completely unnecessary amount of distracting zooms and changes in camera

direction and you'll quite possibly have a headache by the end of your first game.

Control is another sticking point in *Actua Ice Hockey*. Control of open players not in possession of the puck can be reasonable, but overall it's pretty lame. Passes and shots tend to go pretty much anywhere except where you want them to and the game is dead slow. On a positive note, *Actua* supports analogue control, and while it doesn't really help much here, I've been waiting for the Analogue Pad to make a sports game appearance (EA, please take note) for some time now.

Yet another problem concerns when you actually manage to put the puck in the back of the net. When you do actually score, Gremlin have been so obsessed with having lots of pretty flashing lights and loud sirens, that the camera pans up to this nonsense as soon as the puck crosses the line. You



never get to see the puck cross the line, so you never get to see the puck go into the goal. It's only a small problem, but it's annoying nonetheless.

On another point, as *Actua Ice Hockey* is an officially licensed Nagano

Winter Olympics product, you only have the option of choosing from twenty international teams and no NHL teams. Again, not a huge problem, but an unnecessary omission nonetheless.

Ice hockey is a superb game to play and can be extremely entertaining in console form. *Actua Ice Hockey* however is about as much fun as botulism.

i) Unfortunately, there are no *Actua* bif scenes
ii) Talk about brouhaha iii) Puck, anyone?



Head to Head

Last month's three hockey games were all quite good. EA's NHL 98 was the winner, with Sony's NHL Face Off 98 and Virgin's NHL Power Play 98 not far behind. So how does *Actua Ice Hockey* match up against these other games? Well, essentially it's like trying to take a cavalry regiment into battle against a flotilla of tanks with full air support. *Actua Ice Hockey* just isn't even in the same league.

Even comparing *Actua* solely with NHLPP 98 (the weakest of last month's efforts) leads to painful conclusions. *Actua's* dramatic lack of options and poor quality gameplay are a huge problem. Add to this its major problems in terms of graphic production and its limp sound effects, *Actua Ice Hockey* is looking sorrier by the minute. Consider as well the fact that it contains some of the worst laid out option screens in history and plain stupidity in not giving you the chance to view your chosen team's stats until after you've selected them (although this fault is not unique to AIH). *Actua* has only one direction to go: straight to the bottom of the heap.

EA's NHL 98 is still undoubtedly the best choice available for ice hockey fans, and Sony's NHL Face Off 98 is a worthy alternative.

Game Features

Players

Single Player

Accessories

Memory Card

Multi Tap Adaptable
4-14 Players

Analog Pad Compatible

Overall: A very poor hockey game that really shouldn't have been released

5
OUT OF TEN

■ GRAPHICS:	★★	Poor animation
■ SOUND:	★★	Minimal effects
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★	Not nice at all
■ LIFESPAN:	*	You won't enjoy this for long
■ PRESENTATION:	*	Awful menu layout!

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Micro Machines V3

■ PUBLISHER: Codemasters

■ DEVELOPER: Codemasters

■ RELEASE: April

■ PRICE: \$49.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: G

Nic Healey enjoyed pottering about the garden as a lad, but he never expected to speed around it in a Micro Machine!

Fans of the original Micro Machine games on the NES and Super NES were overjoyed when *Micro Machines V3* was released last year (and further pleased by the developer's choice of platform). The new title took the original game, with its top down view of little toy cars racing around

table tops and assorted other equally odd driving arenas, and added a whole host of new goodies!

The first thing Codemasters did was take full advantage of the 32-bit power of the PlayStation to add 3D graphics to the tracks. So, even though it's still a top-down game, you can find yourself

taking full advantage of your environment, racing under books, through 'tunnels', and use ramps and jumps to great effect. *Micro Machines V3* not only added power-ups, including speed boosts and shields, but also boasted an impressive selection of weaponry, such as missiles and mines, right through to the fear-inspiring hammer and retractable claw.

The tracks are the true stars of this title, however, taking place across dinner tables (complete with party guests), laboratory table tops, even pool tables. Even better, the surfaces

Weird and wonderful racing tracks combine with insane power-ups and weapons to prove that you're never too old to play with toys

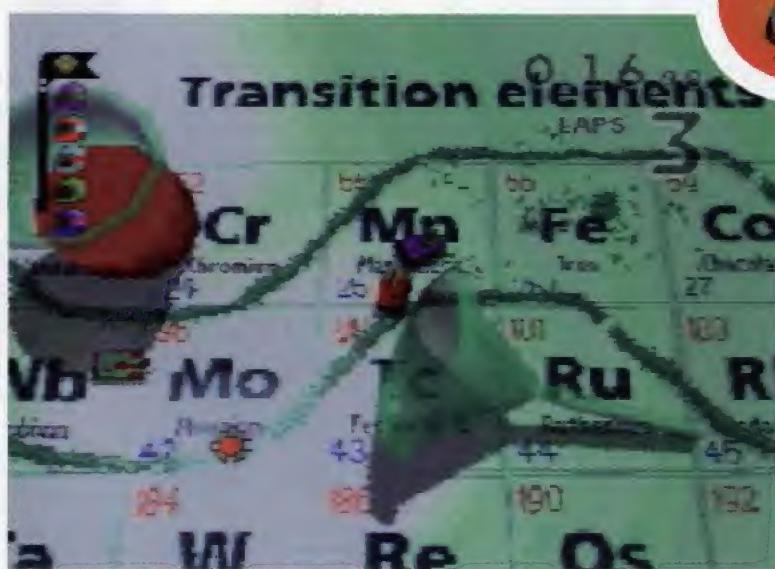


all handle differently, and loaded with such pitfalls as sticky areas, animals, mobile phones, even baguettes! Similarly the cars themselves have different specs - some will have a greater top speed, others might accelerate faster. It all means that you need to carefully pick your car for each track. And if it's all too much at first, you can head over to the driving school



to brush up on your hoon skills.

Micro Machines has always worked best as a multi-player game, so it's good to know that the multitaps can be used to have up to four cars racing at once, a truly terrifying experience indeed! Few other games bring out such malevolence in players as sliding around in bouncy little cars manages to do here. Because all the vehicles in each race have exactly the same speed, the only way to win is to be a better driver - or a more devious and diabolical one! There's nothing quite like tearing down the side of the bench-top neck-to-neck with your opponent, thumbs twitching in anticipation of the narrow 30cm ruler bridge that's coming up any millisecond now! AAARRGGHH!! And the power-ups! To flatten one's foe with the mallet is a truly wonderful thing! Well deserving of Platinum status and equally deserving of your dollars.



Game Features

Players

1 to 4
Players

Accessories

Memory Card

Multi Tap Adaptable
1-4 Players

Standard
Controller

Overall: It's true: Good things come in small packages!

9
OUT OF TEN

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★★	Nice 3D and very fast!
■ SOUND:	★★★★	Great sound effects
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	Magnificent party game!
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Definitely one you'll come back to
■ VALUE:	★★★★★	An essential purchase without question

Tomb Raider

■ PUBLISHER: Eidos

■ DEVELOPER: Core

■ RELEASE: April

■ PRICE: \$49.95

■ CLASSIFICATION: M15

The darling of the PlayStation has gone Platinum, and Nic Healey takes a look at one of the defining moments in the PlayStation's history

There's not much we can say about this game that most people don't already know. If you've missed all the Lara Croft hype then you should stop reading this now. You've obviously been living on a small island off the coast of Bolivia for the last couple of years, with no electricity or communication with the outside world, and nothing is going to bring you up to speed.

When *Tomb Raider* was released, it redefined the way we played and designed platform games. That's no exaggeration. Independent of the character herself (and I'll get to Lara later), the game had an amazing 3D engine, excellent graphics considering the action and an on-going storyline that was actually interesting! The action

wasn't just limited to running, jumping and shooting as in most platformers.

There was actually some thought needed to solve the myriad of puzzles that awaited our skilled young



Tomb Raider II

Alternatives

Tomb Raider II: The Dagger of Xian is the sequel, and the only game that can hold a candle to the original masterpiece



adventurer. If you intended to burst in with both guns blazing and try to bolt your way through the whole level, you'd soon find out just how weak the flesh can be. Based on gameplay alone, *Tomb Raider* was guaranteed to be an instant hit, receiving rave reviews from the gaming press (including a nine from your favourite mag).

But it had more than just good fun. It had Lara. For some reason a young, English, twin pistol-packing, acrobatic, intelligent, treasure hunter (with a finely polygoned figure) caught the imagination of the public. People who had never so much as dropped a 20 cent piece into Galaga, let alone owned a PlayStation were talking about her. Her rendered form graced magazines around the world - and not just gaming mags. She became the first non-real person to be featured on the cover of the only magazine for the terminally hip, *The Face*.

Lara Croft went on to be the inspiration for a whole range of tough female characters that started appearing in games. She has appeared on the walls, screens and dreams of

every member of the gaming public. And now her first adventure is about to be re-released on Platinum. In our original review we said: "*Tomb Raider* is a masterpiece of design and has set the standard for all 3D action games to come." And it has. Buy it.

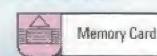
Game Features

Players



Single Player

Accessories



Memory Card



Standard Controller

Overall: If you own a PlayStation, you need a copy of *Tomb Raider*, simple as that

9
OUT OF TEN

Official Australian

PlayStation

09 April 1998

Magazine

■ GRAPHICS:	★★★	So atmospheric, you're there!
■ SOUND:	★★★	A dramatic score that fits the game
■ GAMEPLAY:	★★★★	You won't be able to keep your hands off!
■ LIFESPAN:	★★★★	Thrilling from start to finish
■ VALUE:	★★★★★	This game's good value at full price!





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GAMES ONLINE

Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko

■ PUBLISHER: Crystal Dynamics

■ CATEGORY: 3D Platform

■ RELEASE: April

■ PLAYERS: One

For anyone who managed to escape the hype surrounding the initial appearance of Gex, this is one happening reptile - a herpetologists nightmare, if you will. The wise-cracking,

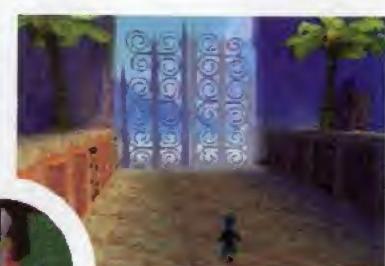
world's TV broadcasts!

The 360°, free-roaming 3D worlds in Gex are all thematically based around TV shows, with a series of rather familiar cartoon images comprising the

comedian Dana Gould again takes on the mantle to provide the voice talent for Gex. With the softly spoken "take that, you cad" it's hard to imagine why enemies don't flee in terror.

it's crude) which ensures adult players will not be bored or find the game too childish.

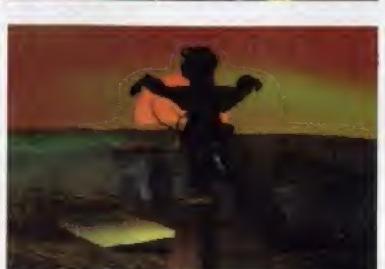
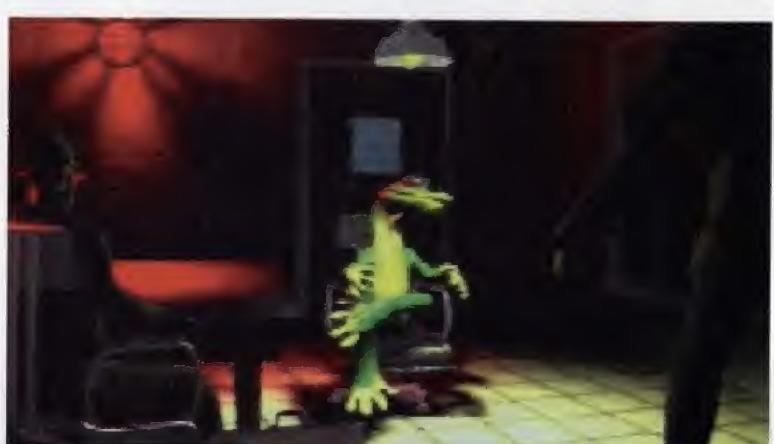
The textures and lighting effects are some of the best ever seen on the



The visuals are thoroughly impressive, with the camera angle constantly and smoothly moving around the debonair reptile, rather than just positioning from a series of fixed vantage points - all showing off the incredible 3D graphics (and rightly so).

The action is cartoon and comic, but there is a certain adulthood about the humour (and I don't mean that

PlayStation, and the presentation throughout is highly polished. Small details such as leaves floating down when you walk through a bush all add to the experience of the game. Fox Interactive's Croc has been comfortably ruling the 3D lizard genre until now, but Gex: Enter the Gecko looks ready to change the channel. Stay tuned for the full review next month.



well-spoken, intensely cool gecko with suction-cup hands and a whip-like tail is reincarnated into 3D in the new Crystal Dynamics game, *Gex: Enter the Gecko*.

Since departing the flat world of the ill-fated 3DO, Gex has entered into a period of great personal training and self-improvement (not to mention late-night TV watching). Unfortunately, he is soon brought back into active service by a shady government agency to once again combat his arch-enemy Rez and, most importantly, rescue the

first level. Anvils fall from the sky, rabbit hunters try to shoot you and you must collect carrots, spinach cans and sticks of TNT. Gex must use all of his jumping skills, tail-whipping ability and insect-eating knowledge to fight the troops of evil pitted against him.

In his first console appearance, Gex impressed with his sharp-tongue and cultured accent. In Gex, American cable

From the fully-rendered intro sequence, right through the game itself, Gex is very smooth



Ghost In The Shell

■ PUBLISHER: SCEI

■ CATEGORY: 3D Shooter

■ RELEASE: June

■ PLAYERS: One

Megatech Body, a major cybernetics factory, has been the target of a bomb attack. Eighteen staff are in critical condition and the bombing was instigated by a revolutionary known by the code name Zevura 27; his terrorist group is still at large in the bayside area. To deal with the situation, the elite unit Section 9, headed by Motoko Kusanagi have been called in. Piloting agile insect-like tanks called Fuchikomas (which also have an intelligence of their own), they head off to the area for a confrontation.

And so begins *Ghost in the Shell*, the frantic blast-fest from Sony Japan and comic creator Masamune Shirow. As the rookie of Section 9, your job is to

complete missions as briefed by Kusanagi or other members of the team. All of which require engaging the myriad of terrorists in mecha combat - it's just as well you're in a Fuchikoma! Zevura 27's comrades have an incredible arsenal of weapons and mecha at their disposal, including mobile missile launchers, gigantic laser cannons, attack helicopters and a variety of standard and multi-footed tanks. At the end of each level, a massive 'boss' mecha awaits.

From the bayside you blast your way through another 11 missions set in urban centres, building interiors, sewers and waterways to the final showdown at Aeropolis II, a skyscraper that houses a nuclear reactor in the sub-levels. Not content with the destruction of Megatech Body, Zevura 27 plans to set the reactor to critical mass and obliterate the entire city! Kusanagi is busy hacking into the system in the basement, but the control room is at the top of the building. It's up to you to save the day.

Ghost in the Shell also

Superbly produced and complete with anime cut scenes, Ghost in the Shell is high on our want list



features a great Training mission, a race against the clock to shoot down a set quota of targets that pop up (and sometimes return fire) before time runs out for each section. There's a few of them too, from the vertical walls of a building to tunnels, finishing up with a one-to-one with another Fuchikoma. If yours gets destroyed or the time's up, Kusanagi will call you a wimp and ask you to show her some guts!

Supplementing the shooting action are the excellent anime cut scenes providing the background story of government intrigue and a fair bit of Fuchikoma humour (which didn't make it into the movie adaptation). Boasting one of the highest production values we've seen lately, *Ghost in the Shell* will be out soon and should be on every anime action game fan's must-have list!



VR Powerboat Racing

■ PUBLISHER: Interplay

■ CATEGORY: Racing

■ RELEASE: April

■ PLAYERS: One or two

Other than the exaggerated gameplay of *Rapid Racer*, boat racing has been a sadly neglected genre on the PlayStation. In fact, it's safe to say that a real-action powerboat racing game has not yet hit the PSX. That looks ready to change with the release of *VR Powerboat Racing* later this year. Interplay productions have put a great deal of effort into making sure that this game operates exactly like a true powerboat race.

The game has 32 different boats to choose from over two classes - monohull or catamaran. Monohulls are the first class you're presented with and the catamarans are unlocked in the Championship mode. You'll find that this almost turns *VR Powerboat Racing* into two different games, as the cats require a different level of skill as well as a different use of the controls.

There are also three engine classes for each of the boats. These are Minnow, Pike and Barracuda -



roughly translating into beginner, medium and expert.

The game action takes place over 10 tracks set in locations such as Japan, Russia, New York and Australia. Interplay elected to include an Australian track based around sections of Murray River (although it's less murky than we remember). Each track has multiple routes, with short-cuts, secret passages and jumps allowing for some flexibility. The tracks are also designed to change and interact with background animations. For example, in the New York track you may find that what was previously a police boat chasing a water taxi off in the sidelines is now a large



obstacle directly in your path - which can also be used as a floating jump. Similarly, the tracks are designed with changing weather patterns. If you race in England you may well start on a sunny track, but

Split-screen, two styles of craft, a huge list of tracks... *VR Powerboat* has a host of features

during the race weather conditions could become dark and stormy, with changes in the water dynamics and lighting.

As is fairly usual in contemporary games, you must progress through the three classes to gain access to other stages and modes. Championship mode is not unlocked until a certain number of wins or placings in Minnow class. Come first in all six Pike tracks and you'll be granted Slalom mode. And so on. A two-player split-screen mode is also available.

In terms of gameplay, *VR Powerboat Racing* has an adaptive AI

that can add an extremely challenging element to a race, using advanced tactics and manoeuvres. Graphics are excellent, with a game engine that allows for polygon collisions and intersections, meaning you can collide with other boats in mid-air or even knock them off jumps. Full light sourcing adds to the weather effects and you'll find that conditions such as fog will slow you down - or cause you to crash more regularly.

VR Powerboat Racing looks like an enjoyable addition to the collection of racing sims available on the PSX and an impressive opening move in the powerboat racing genre.

Snow Racer '98

■ PUBLISHER: Infogrames

■ CATEGORY: Racing

■ RELEASE: TBA

■ PLAYERS: One or two

With the hype surrounding the recent Winter Olympics, there has been plethora of skiing/snowboarding type games available. *Snow Racer* is the latest game in this heavily-travelled genre, but it is a refreshing exception to the previous explosions of banality. Firstly, this is a game that will appeal to those people who would prefer to go at top speed downhill through a forest rather than pull indy-McTwists off car bonnets and do rail slides along the roof guttering of five-star lodges.

Quite simply, the emphasis is on racing, and a sublime sensation of speed as you pelt downhill, narrowly avoiding reams of obstacles at Mach 3.

The other focus is on a definable path down the mountain. That is, you have quite a bit of horizontal space to the right and left, and completely different terrains and conditions along these separate routes. You can select the course as you go along and stay on the bits that you like, or go off on a tangent for a change, as you would in reality.

Snow Racer involves snowboarding as well as skiing, in Championship, Freestyle or Versus modes, doing either Slalom or

Downhill Time Trial. The snow graphics are absolutely superb, which is a really refreshing change from the decidedly average stuff we have seen lately. It's non-reflective, smooth-edged, and already has gorgeous powder cuts in it racers before you have already carved.

The landscape is quite realistic in its design. Curving hillsides, dips, forests, rock faces, buildings and ski lift pylons all form part of the 'hazard' list. It quite literally looks like a real life snow resort, and accordingly, it's great fun to go hell fast and miss trees by millimetres. The controls are very nice, smooth and responsive, and cope nicely at high speeds as you scoot between metal poles and rocky boulders with barely enough room to fit your board edgewise. There are also large ski jumps along the course, off which you can get some serious air when hit at the right speed. And you can wall-ride right up rock the faces which have a gradual build-up of ice to vertical. Like Coolboarders, the snowboarding stages allow you to pull off a variety of tricks.

The animation of your snowboarder/ski-punk is very smooth, with not a hint of ungainliness or lack



One plank or two? *Snow Racer '98* comes with both kinds of snow sport: skiing AND snowboarding

of coordination, making it the best looking snow-based game yet seen. *Snow Racers* is shaping up to be the snowboarding title you've been waiting for. Oh yeah, and it's got those strange skier people, too.



Forsaken

■ PUBLISHER: Probe Entertainment

■ CATEGORY: Acclaim

■ RELEASE: May

■ PLAYERS: One or two

Forsaken is the latest thing in the zero-G flight sim, involving combat between Space Pirate scavengers on a deserted, uninhabited Earth which was wasted in an experimental military catastrophe. "Whoops!" You take the part of a Cyberpunk-type scavenger riding a high-tech hover-bike, infiltrating Earth's former strongholds to loot the voluminous riches that await within. This involves destroying the



robotic security droids, and any rival Pirates you may encounter - it's dog-eat-dog in this post-nuclear landscape!

The thing that first grabs your attention is the simply amazing graphics this game has. Easily on a par with *G-police* or *Wipeout 2097*, *Forsaken* has a rich

flechette scatter guns, to heat-seeking sunbursts, nuclear shock-bombs and hovering orbital gun couriers.

The full version is going to include full cinematic cut scenes, 16 cool space pirate characters, a range of multi-player game modes, and a professional techno soundtrack. This is the kind of game where everything gets absolutely polished to the nth degree. *Forsaken* simply oozes quality. You should definitely keep an eye out for this one.

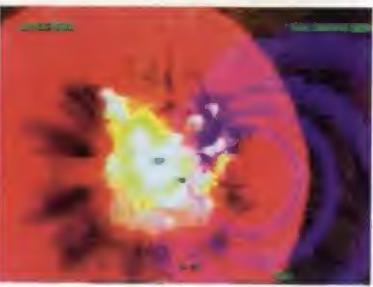
Decent style graphics and gameplay, with foxy chicks appearing as characters. What more could any red-blooded PlayStation owner ask for?



environment with effects like coloured light-sourcing, particle system explosions (where hundreds of pieces of shrapnel scatter outwards) and translucent 'stealth' ships which have a barely discernible silhouette. All this and running at an estimated 60 frames per second! The game is absolutely smooth, even during the most hectic encounter.

On top of that, the enemy intelligence is totally revolutionary. During combat, enemy ships dodge your slower projectiles and weave around, becoming very slippery targets! They also scuttle for cover and hide behind walls when under heavy fire. You really have to out-think their evasive behaviour to nail them before they get you.

Using only the latest in underground high-tech munitions, the weapons are completely cool and range from beefy reflective energy blasts and





Klonoa

PUBLISHER: Namco

■ **CATEGORY:** Platform

■ RELEASE: May

■ PLAYERS: One

New from Namco is *Kloona*, an odd little Japanese adventure starring an animal even odder than Crash. The developers haven't gone to any trouble breaking new ground, but they've put their efforts towards clarity and fun. The result is a jolly jumping spree through Happyland, punctuated with conversation and conflict with friend and foe. Thick in plot, there is always someone to find or an object to retrieve.



The hero looks like a walking cat with large floppy hand-like ears, which are really quite useful. In tow for the whole adventure he has a friend, a

small blue spirit with an exceptionally high voice. Also, to aid him he has a magical ring he found in the forest. He can use it to turn his enemies into ammo, one at a time. Aimed at the *Crash/Pandemonium* audience, *Klonoa* boasts the rare ability to captivate instantly. Progressive puzzles and friendly enemies are the staple sustenance in the *Klonoa* world.

The gameplay is not unusual. It's a side-scrolling platformer in 3D graphics, like the *Pandemonium* games, but the key simplicity and the damned cute character of the whole game should make it a loved-one in anyone's home. Simple pleasure is assured by the use of only two buttons throughout the entire game, with a host of manoeuvres available.

The clear, crisp and colourful surroundings will hold anyone's attention, and even though at first it appears to be strictly 2D under a 3D skin, the followed paths twist and turn and even cross at times, giving the game a labyrinth feel. The flat sprites are so well rounded that they blend right in amongst the 3D environments, as well as appearing as fearsome as an icy pole.

We have been enjoying a Japanese version so some of the plot specifics have alluded us, but the local translated version is expected to be available in June and we'll take another look then.



Platform skills: It's all in the wrist

Every new platform game needs a gimmick to distinguish it from the masses of similar titles that are competing against it in the marketplace. Klonoa's neat trick involves the magic ring that he stumbles across while out for a jolly stroll in the forest one day. As seen in this illustration from the Japanese instruction booklet, it allows him to latch onto baddies from close range and hold them at arm's length. They can then be used as a weapon against other foes, or as a booster to gain more height when jumping. This is a vital skill that must be learnt if you want to make any progress, but like all good platform games, it's very easy to master and with a few minutes of play will become second nature.



chill

■ PUBLISHER: Eidos

■ CATEGORY: TBA

■ RELEASE: TBA

■ PLAYERS: TBA

If you're anything like us, you probably have a heightened sense of your own personal safety. That means turning to the PlayStation whenever you feel like some thrilling snowboard action - at least you won't end up like Sonny Bono. There have been a few boarding games popping up lately, but as they say, variety is the spice of life. With that in mind, we had a little play of the preview version of Eidos' *Chill*. This snowboard extravaganza looks like it will take the sport away from Cool Boarders-style racing, and point it firmly in the direction of the freestylers.

You begin with four different boarders to choose from, each with a choice of three different boards. The

The truly great news is that *Chill* will support Sony's analog controller, and will have a two-player split screen mode, as well as support the link cable option. All in all, *Chill* certainly makes us think that Cool Boarders' tyrannical reign may soon be over!



The action in *Chill* is smooth as the driven snow, with plenty of planking variety for those who aren't purely into stunting

boarders are the classic selection - two guys, two girls, with an option to change their outfits should you choose to do so. There's even a long intro sequence giving a bit of insight into their 'personalities'. Trix is a bit sassy, the white guy is a womaniser etc. Actually the intro is rather cute, with all four dancing their way through the opening rap number - it's even got one of those ride-on bouncy ball toys that we remember from our misspent youth.

There are five different mountains to play on with multiple runs on each, giving a total of 50 tracks all up. You'll start on the easier slopes to help get your technique down pat, then progress up the mountains to increasingly more hairy territory.

There are tricks a-plenty on the runs if that's your thing, jumping over trees and even cows (although the cows may be a tad cold out there in the snow). There are also some Slalom runs, some village tracks, even a bizarre parachuting-off-a-cliff number that scared the hell out of me the first time it happened. Once you've improved your score enough, hidden bonus runs will open up, offering ski jumps and unique races, like the avalanche race.



Pax Corpus

■ PUBLISHER: CRYO

■ CA ■ CATEGORY: 3D adventure

■ RELEASE: ■ RELEASE: March

■ PLAYER: ■ PLAYERS: One

This latest offering from Cryo is the game that sent us into a spin when we heard about it some months ago. You see, *Pax Corpus* was originally based on the *Aeon Flux* cartoons, with the main character being *Aeon* herself (the lovely and deadly lass that she is). Unfortunately, there were licensing hassles (aren't there always) and it doesn't look like we'll be seeing an *Aeon*

simple - shoot, jump, dodge and generally blast your way through each of the 40 levels onto the next (and eventually final) goal. By combining adventure elements, you'll find yourself solving puzzles, collecting weaponry and gathering information as you head through the game. We'd be lying if we said that this didn't feel at least a little like *Tomb Raider*, but

the general feel is certainly sufficiently different enough to warrant a second look.

The futuristic environment that the action takes place in is wonderfully rendered in 3D - a dark and menacing mechanical world. Your character, the pistol-packing Kahlee, is designed with a definite nod to *Aeon*, complete with thigh-high boots, leather halter and astoundingly long legs. She's also something of an acrobat, capable of high jumps, backflips and skilled dodges (even to the point of easily avoiding bullets and lasers).

Gameplay is simple enough, with single commands for shoot, jump and action. The action button also doubles as a punch/kick if you're not standing near anything that can be manipulated. The presentation in *Pax Corpus* is also excellent, with cut scenes and menu screens all meshing carefully with the overall feel of the game.

Although it's still a little too early in production to really make a judgement, the preview copy of *Pax Corpus* looks promising - even if it isn't the game we were all hoping for.

The action in *Pax Corpus* moves on seamlessly from the impressive FMV introduction



game for a while. But Cryo still had the game so, with a few slight tweaks to keep the lawyers happy, it was recast as *Pax Corpus*.

The story is set in a future world where men have been made slaves and the planet is ruled by the Alcyon Corporation. A certain Dr Ellyis from Alcyon has recently completed the *Pax Corpus* project, a biotechnological experiment that grants perfect health and immortal life - at the cost of free will. The Alcyon head wants to use this to rule over a race of mindless and passive people. You, on the other hand, have some different ideas.

The action in *Pax Corpus* is fairly



Deathtrap Dungeon

■ PUBLISHER: Eidos

■ CATEGORY: 3D adventure

■ RELEASE: April

■ PLAYERS: One

Deathtrap Dungeon is Eidos' impressive new 3D action-adventure epic, based upon the most popular of Ian Livingstone's multi-million selling Fighting Fantasy game books.

Fang, City of Lost Souls, once known as the City of Plenty. Years ago darkness filled the sky in the shape of Melkor the Red Dragon. Old and steeped in malice, it rained fire and destruction upon the peaceful inhabitants of Fang. Melkor enslaved the people to its will, oppressing them with fearful ferocity, feeding on them, and stealing their wealth. He forced them to build a labyrinth, deep in the hillside above Fang. The Dragon made it his lair, and filled it with all kinds of tricks, traps and

loathsome monsters to guard him. Baron Sukumvit, once the ruler of Fang, tried to free his city from the terror of the dragon. He let it be known that anyone who slew the dragon would receive a great reward. Ever since, warriors and heroes have tried to overcome the trials of the labyrinth and kill Melkor. Survival is unlikely, yet many take the risk, for the prize is great - a purse of 10,000 Gold Pieces. You are one such hero, with enough greed and bravery to take the challenge.

It's clear that two principles have been held close during the development of *Deathtrap Dungeon*: fun and simplicity. The combat system is fast, furious and easy to use. The levels are modelled in full 3D, creating an atmospheric dungeon filled with cunningly designed traps. You'll soon find yourself in battles against over five different enemies across 10 levels of complex dungeon staging. The fighting is awe inspiring, with swords, warhammers, blunderbusses, even flamethrowers, as well as spells, potions, charms and our favourite, the exploding pig!

An intelligent camera system has been used to allow the player's



Deathtrap Dungeon gives a good dose of light-hearted 3D adventure-style gaming

impressively animated character to be viewed from any angle. Plunging down pits or being devoured by dragons, the action will be captured automatically from a variety of angles.

It's also impressive to see there smoothness of the player's involvement. There is no clunky interfaces destroying the gameplay - you really feel as though you are in *Deathtrap Dungeon*. The 3D animation by Glassworks runs incredibly smoothly, without sacrificing detail of either the characters or the backgrounds.

Deathtrap Dungeon is an excellent working of action adventure within a 3D setting - but of course, what can you



expect from the people who brought us Lara Croft? With excellent playability and real feeling of addictiveness, we can't wait to see the finished version.



One

■ PUBLISHER: ASC Games

■ CATEGORY: Platform Shooter

■ RELEASE: April

■ PLAYERS: One

Memories of a number of old 16-bit shoot 'em ups came flooding back to us when we had a go of *One*, the new third person 3D blaster from GT Interactive. Its gameplay harks back to the arcade fuelled days when shooters like *Mercs* and *Smash TV* were considered the kit's mitts. Anyone hoping for a leisurely adventure will be rudely awakened, just as the main character of this game does in the intro. There he is, crashed out on the floor from a hard night of partying, when the security forces decide to pay him a visit - by blowing in his apartment with helicopter gunships! This short, sharp intro leads straight into the game, with the first level seeing you literally running for your life as the choppers give chase, sending wave after wave of incendiary rockets after you.

This would be enough to get most people a little annoyed, and *One* is no exception. In fact, he's so pissed off that the more things he destroys, the stronger he grows and the more powerful his attacks become. Things



settle down a bit in the ensuing stages, with *One* having the opportunity to wreak vengeance on his pursuers on the rooftops of the 2000AD-inspired futuristic city.

The dark, foreboding atmosphere of the game's setting is strongly conveyed with moody lighting effects and good background noise. You even get to listen in on the police radio and hear them panic as you cut through their hapless forces! The gameplay backs up the scenario, with the action moving from area to area throughout the city as

From the futuristic inner-city to the desert mesa's, the action in *One* starts off fast and furious and never slows down

you make your break for freedom. There's one level in which you have to carefully climb along a series of window ledges while the SWAT teams hunt you down. This is quite nerve wracking, as you have to keep the pace up while at the same time being very careful not to fall to the street far below.

To say this game is 'action packed' would be a gross understatement. *One* is the sort of game in which you don't take your thumb off the fire button until either the final end credits roll, or you run out of lives... which is something that happens a lot. If you've been keen to play a good old fashioned blaster with funky 3D graphics, *One* is the stress relief you've been waiting for.



Tommi Mäkinen International Rally Championship

■ PUBLISHER: Europress

■ CATEGORY: Racing

■ RELEASE: April

■ PLAYERS: One or two



With smooth motion, diverse tracks, changing weather conditions and multiple cars, TMIRC should satisfy even the most devoted rally fan

One of the things we've noticed about games of late is the strive for realism that has occurred in the last couple of years, especially in regard to driving games. Sometimes it feels like the term 'sim' is more popular than 'game', often at the expense of 'fun'. *Europress' International Rally Championships* might come from the sim school of gaming, but it certainly doesn't look like it's going to allow anything to get in the way of it being a fun title to play.

International Rally Championships boasts nine cars (with one hidden) over a huge variety of track styles, all set in locations from around the world.

The selection of accurately rendered rally cars may be customised, with practice, to suit your particular preferences as well as the perfect engine and handling requirement of specific tracks. The cars handle in a remarkably lifelike fashion, interacting well with the tracks

and other cars. The option of manual gear box (including reverse) will make many a rally enthusiast extremely happy. The 3D physics incorporated into the game also allow for the cars to ride track edges, and steering and handling is affected by bumps and irregularities in the track.

The track terrains are extremely diverse, with sand, tarmac, mud and snow all appearing. A broad series of environmental effects also occur during the game, creating new challenges for the driver. These include snow, rain, dust storms and fog. There are even a number of night time

scenarios, with great lighting effects from the car's headlights.

The developers aim to keep the frame rate at around 30 frames per second, creating smooth motion effects, especially in regard to interaction with the background and other cars. Europress has, thankfully, managed to dramatically cut loading times by carefully storing data on the CD in

contiguous chunks per track, allowing for continuous reads rather than in a broken read-seek-read-seek style.

Although there are plenty of driving games around these days, there's always room for one more if it's a good one. Hopefully *Tommi Mäkinen International Rally Championships* will fall into this category when we take a look at the finished version.



Men in Black

■ PUBLISHER: Gremlin

■ CATEGORY: Action

■ RELEASE: April

■ PLAYERS: One

When a movie is both as popular and as hyped as the film *Men in Black* was, you just know that a game can not be that far around the corner. You hope that it's good but, it's unfortunately true that mainly they're not. Thankfully, SouthPeak Interactive has pulled out all the stops for the *Men in Black* game and, as such, it looks like a rather nice offering.

You begin *Men in Black* in the role of The Fresh Prince's character (and a fairly accurately represented polygonal model it is) as you investigate a New York apartment burglary. Beat up some thugs, and you'll find yourself at the *Men in Black* training facility. After a short briefing, you get to choose which of the movie's three characters you'll play (Jones, Smith or Fiorentino) and what weapons you'll take in the next adventure. (You won't be disappointed, with a selection of six weapons ranging from the Noisy Cricket to a Series 4 Deatomizer.) There are three adventures in *Men in Black*, and they're all enjoyably distinct from the movie. You get to travel to an Arctic Circle listening post, the darkness of the Amazon rainforests, and the private island of a Bill Gates-like computer genius (or is the correct term nerd?).

Controlling your character is fairly standard fare, with the usual actions of fight, jump, and fire a weapon (made easier by the presence of a bullseye that appears on baddies when you successfully target them). You can also collect objects and store them in a personal inventory. Overall, the feel of the gameplay is actually very reminiscent of the Resident Evil series. Walk along, shoot the baddies, solve the mysteries. It's a neat package that works well.

The graphics move very nicely, although the walking motion used for the characters is a little unnerving (it's a little zombie-ish). You also get some great interaction with your

environments - which, again are rather beautifully rendered.

It's a little unfortunate that you only play the missions solo in *Men in Black*, because the film had a great thing going with the Smith and Jones chemistry. In the game there's just no opportunity for witty banter or the fun you could have working with a hip partner. But nevermind that, because *Men in Black* still retains enough of the atmosphere from the movie and has enough of its own steam to work as a game.

The Fresh Prince never looked so good! Men in Black has impressive graphics and plays well



GEX: draw the Gecko

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AFTER A BRIEF PERIOD OF INTENSE TRAINING, GEX, THE WORLD'S MOST ERUDITE LIZARD, HAS COME BACK TO SAVE HUMANITY. GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO SEES THE RETURN OF THE DEBONAIR CHAP, AND OUR FRIENDS AT CT INTERACTIVE ARE SO OVERJOYED THAT THEY'VE GIVEN US 6 COPIES TO GIVE AWAY!

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PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
78 RENWICK ST
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CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

1. Employees of Next Media companies and CT Interactive may not enter.
2. Entries must be received by April 22, 1998.
3. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence may be entered into.
4. Winners will be notified by mail and will be announced in a future issue.

WIN a lightsaber!

+ 6 COPIES OF MASTERS OF TERÄS KÄSI TO BE WON

Masters Of Teräs Käsi is the new Star Wars game for the PlayStation. It pits nine characters from the Star Wars universe against each other in a series of hand-to-hand, blaster-to-battleaxe battles. Luke, Han, Chewie and Princess Leia square off against Boba Fett and a host of treacherous foes, including the mysterious Arden Lyn...

No one will stand in your way with a lightsaber in your hands, you'll be the envy of your peers and the ruler of your neighbourhood! You may not have the powers of a Jedi Knight (yet), but it is within your grasp to win a replica lightsaber and a copy of Masters Of Teras Kasi!

For your chance to win the replica lightsaber and one of five copies of the game from Metro Games, answer this simple question on the back of an envelope and send it to:

Star Wars Comp, PlayStation Magazine, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016

**Q: BOBA FETT PILOTS THE SLAVE-1
WHAT IS HIS MAIN CARGO?**



**STAR
WARS**



**LUCASFILM
Int'l**

SECOND CHANCE TO ENTER!

Hey, didn't we run this competition last month? Yep, but since then we've had some very exciting news! The Lightsaber we're giving away is this special limited edition replica from Lucas Arts. It features hand crafted design modeled from the original prop used in the first Star Wars film. If you've already entered you are still in the running to win, but if you haven't (or you just want to improve your chances), now's the time! Good luck, and may the Force be with you!

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY: 1. Employees of Next Media companies and Metro Games may not enter. 2. Entries must be received by March 25, 1998. 3. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence may be entered into.

ONLY THE BEST GO PLATINUM

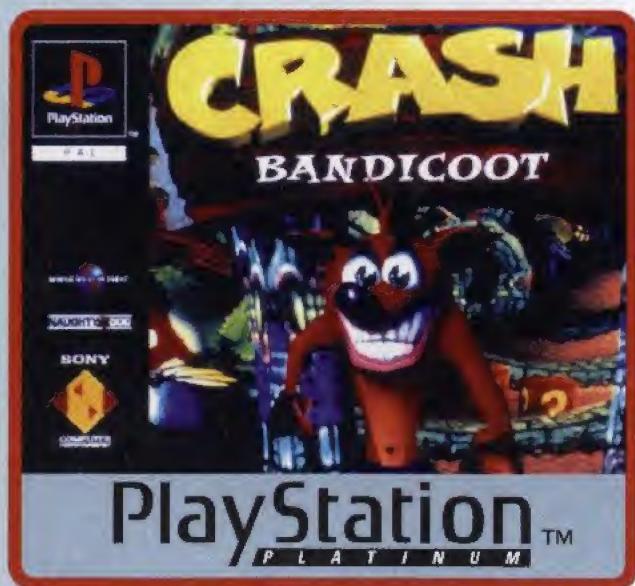
THE PLATINUM RANGE of PlayStation games is a very important initiative developed by Sony Computer Entertainment in order to make gaming more affordable to the broader community. Platinum games are all quality titles that have been re-released after achieving record breaking sales worldwide. They also must be released in their original format for at least nine months before being considered for Platinum status.

While there are already a

number of "cheap" games in the marketplace, you'll find that, apart from the Platinum titles already released, most are titles which did not sell well when released and have simply been "reduced to clear". If PlayStation owners want quality games at a lower price, they should look for the Platinum brand. The PlayStation console had an outstanding Christmas sales period. This has resulted in a huge uplift in the number of PlayStation consoles in homes. For these new owners,

the Platinum range is an absolute must. They can begin the gaming experience at a lower price and go on to build a collection. Platinum also allows PlayStation owners who enjoy one style of game such as racing, to experience the various other different styles of game such as fighting, platform, adventure, strategy and many others at a more affordable price. Platinum games will retail from \$39.95 and key new titles will be added to the range throughout 1998.

Conditions of entry: 1. Employees of Next Media companies and Sony Computer Entertainment may not enter. 2. Entries must be received by April 22, 1998. 3. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence may be entered into. 4. Winners will be notified by mail and will be announced in a future issue.



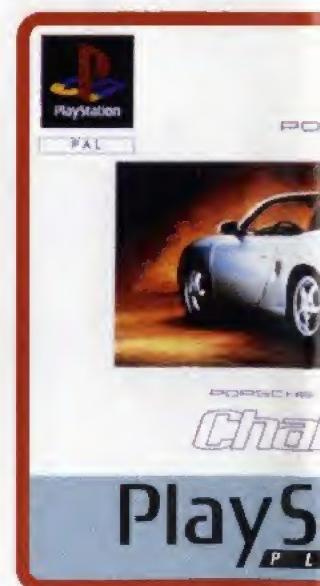
Crash Bandicoot

The first PlayStation platform game hero, Crash Bandicoot is an essential part of any PlayStation collection. The graphics are lush, the gameplay is joyful, but best of all is the wild hog ride that takes Crash on a mad dash for his life!



Formula 1

F1 is the ultimate form of motor racing, and Psygnosis' Formula 1 is the ultimate driving game for the PlayStation. The speed, the sounds, and all the thrills of the real thing will turn your lounge room into the pit lane!



Porsche Challenge

Porsche sports cars are hot, but most people will only drive them behind the wheel of the PlayStation. Porsche Challenge is the most enjoyable driving

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THE SUCCESS OF
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Tekken 2

Tekken 2 is the superlative arcade beat 'em up that helped carve the PlayStation a reputation for having the best fighting games around. Tekken 2 is still at the top of the list and is considered by many to be the best fighter ever.



Wipeout 2097

Want to go fast? Wipeout 2097 will give you the biggest adrenaline rush you'll ever get from a video game as you scream through the tight, twisting and ultra-slick tracks and on to victory!

enge

hly desirable machines,
ee them disappear into
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CONTROLLER CONFUSION

Without doing too much of the "grease, grease, oil, oil..." which seems to appear at the top of everyone's letters to your magazine - You DO have a great magazine! Now monthly, excellent!!

The whole Sony PlayStation package including the extensive volume, variety and quality of games, the supporting magazines, playable demos and peripherals is what puts it front of the other gaming consoles.

Having said that - What's the story with the NEW analog controller? It appears, after a phone call to SCE in Melbourne, that Sony have stopped production of their analog controller, the very time that I want to buy one having recently purchased, the analog compatible, Crash 2. All stores in Adelaide have sold out over Christmas with no ability to restock! I can only deduce, considering all the other new games coming out that are analog compatible, that this is some strategic marketing plan to release an alternative (more expensive?) option. It couldn't be a major hiccup in production could it?

In a reply to a previous letter you mentioned a new "Dual Shock" shaking type analog controller being released in Japan. Would you be able to try your connections to Sony to be able to enlighten us on the analog controller situation for Australia, whether it be more of the same or the

new "Dual Shock" controller????!!!

- Geaff Riley

The analog pad is dead. Long live the analog pad! Yes, the previously available analog controller has been discontinued by Sony and is no longer available. The new Dual Shock analog pad is to replace it and will available in May to coincide with the release of Gran Turismo. The final price has yet to be set, but Sony is hoping to keep it in the same range as the old analog pad. As for getting hold of an analog pad in the meantime, good luck! As you've discovered, most retailers are completely sold out and won't begetting any new stock until the Dual Shock arrives. And yes, it will be compatible with all existing analog games

CENSORSHIP SHUFFLE

Hello PlayStation Magazine. I love the new posters and until now I have loved all the demos, but issue 7's demo really lagged up my PlayStation, making the music stutter and the games eventually lock up. I was wondering if this was the only defect or were they all defective? Anyhow I trust you'll fix the problem before next issue.

In response to the letter DODGY DEMO - I have Air Combat and Ace Combat 2 and I found the demo to play exactly like AC2 so what the hell are you talking about? You do know all planes have different stats don't you? I found AC2 to be a good buy, but too easy to complete and it was a bad mistake to drop the two-player option.

I just finished Final Fantasy VII, and there is like a half hour video at the end. Make sure you watch the credits or you'll miss the last video - I'm not going tell you about it so I don't spoil it for you.

I don't think games should be



Wipeout 2097 doesn't need animated gore

censored. Think of Soul Blade, what they censored was nothing. Why did they bother - now the video doesn't make sense. Why would a girl take a bath with clothes on and cover her tits when somebody approaches if her clothes were on?

Finally, in response to NOT VIOLENT ENOUGH, here's a good example of somebody desensitised to violence, especially when there's apparently no violence in Wipeout 2097. Next time I'm driving down the freeway and the car in front is slowing me down, I'll just launch a heat seeker up his ass. Nooo, no violence in that. [And if you couldn't tell - I was being sarcastic]

- Commander - ZIN

Sorry about the demo disc Commander, you're the first person to complain, and quite frankly we're not completely sure about the problem you're talking about.

Yes, 2097 is violent. But it is a dehumanised violence that is rather different from the interpersonal violence of, say a fighting game. I think what the Brett was trying to say was that Wipeout 2097 was a good game without needing animated blood and limbs flying around the place

Get your facts straight before you start making accusations.

PS: I think Wipeout 2097 is an unreal game, but Destruction Derby 2 has the better soundtrack.

- Deano

Picture a guy sitting down with a guitar and plucking the strings until the song sounds right... All good music is hard to write, whether it's metal, techno or classical. For the record, we enjoy such varied artists as Richard H. Kirk, Frank Bennett, Air Liquide, The Sugarhill Gang, Autechre, Frank Zappa, Nick Cave, John Kelly, AC/DC, Massive, A Tribe Called Quest, Iggy Pop, etc... You get the idea

ADULT RIGHTS

I am just writing a short response to the letter Not Violent Enough, written by Brett. He has written saying that Doom, Time Crisis and Resident Evil are violent, and they are (although Time Crisis could have done with a bit of the red stuff). But the issue here is not so much about censorship, but more about decent adults such as myself being denied the right to see and hear what we want to in our own homes. This isn't just about video games, but if you don't like it, switch it off, don't look or don't buy it. I am not saying that there should be no banning of games, just that games that are banned should be restricted to those that depict rape and other disgusting things, like child bashing, drug usage etc. The OFLC (and the government for that matter) should stop denying adults (ie voters) our rights. Thank you for letting me have my say.

- David Sanford

Censorship is a little more of a tricky situation than many people think. You see the fact is that games companies don't want to inhibit their market. Therefore a game that has to be rated 18+ and, obviously, can't be sold to minors is going to cut into profits. Many films and games are self-censored by companies to avoid an R rating by the Office of Film and Literature Classification. It's more about marketing than protecting people. But you must also ask yourself this: Why do you want to see more blood in games?

MYSTERIES OF THE MAGAZINE

Thanks for printing my picture (Ranma 1/2) in the Feedback section in Issue 5. In the same issue, you said that on your trip to Japan you purchased a copy of Tobal 2, which must have been NTSC, so you must have converted your PlayStation to play NTSC games or, and I doubt this, you bought a PlayStation over there and a couple of brand new games with it. So which is it?

Anyway, I thought I'd just have to



The Analogue Pad may have disappeared from our stores, but the Dual Shock is heading in

tell everyone this. There is a new arcade game, which hasn't come out here yet, called Marvel VS Capcom. You can actually play Megaman and his dog, Morrigan from the Darkstalkers, Venom and lots more. I can't wait to play it!

Did you also know that Namco has come out with an RPG called Tales of Destiny? Wow! Namco's first RPG. I'm going to get that before you do, on NTSC version. My last thing to say is that X-Men VS Street Fighter, King of Fighters 97 and other great arcade titles will definitely be out on the PSX.

That's all, hope you print this.

- Alan Sy

Being the Secret Masters of PlayStation that we are (SMOPs to you plebs at home) we have access to technology you can only dream of - Blue debugging PlayStations, Black Yaroze PlayStations, NTSC PlayStations - all happily supplied by our good friends at Sony. So in answer to your first question Alan, neither.

As to the Marvel VS Capcom arcade game, take a look in our update section for some screen shots. Tales of Destiny looks excellent by the way, as does X-men VS Street Fighter. Both of those games have become the latest



Felony 11-79. It may not be violent, but it's certainly a little dubious in the eyes of the law!

favourites around the office. We'll tell you more about PAL release dates later

ISSUE OF THE MONTH

Hi! Although I have only recently begun reading your mag, I think they're terrific! I have got the playable demo of Felony 11-79 and I was wondering why the full game was M15+? I mean, you don't really kill anybody right? For instance, in Grand Theft Auto you run over tonnes of pedestrians whose blood, guts and other internal organs splatter all over the pavement. Don't you think Felony 11-79 looks pretty violence free in comparison? I think it

should have a G8+ rating.

PS: Could you please do a full size Time Crisis poster next issue? I would like one to go on my wall. Or possibly a playable demo?

- Jack Heath

Although there's no physical violence in Felony 11-79 per se, there are still realistic depictions of illegal acts, ie ram-raiding and malicious damage. That's what would have garnered the M15+ for that game. It's not just the actions, it's the motives behind them that are cause for concern. But hey, Felony 11-79 is one of our favourite car games ever!

PLEASE EXPLAIN

What does Pauline Hanson want to stop immigration? Australia's population is around 18 million, while America's is around 260 million. Developers are scared to make games for Australia because Australia has a low population and they probably won't make as much of a profit. Maybe they'll even lose money. If Australia immigrated another 50 million people, we would have excellent world class games, such as

magazines like Hyper I am overwhelmed by the plethora of strategy games on the PC and I believe there should be games specifically designed for the PSX. I understand the limitations of the PlayStation, but I still think there should be more of these kind of games available. I would jump at the chance of getting a game like Dark Reign or Total Annihilation and I'm sure they could spread it over three discs or something so that it would run well and have reasonable graphics. I feel I could design quite a good game, but I also feel that I shouldn't HAVE to.

If they had left in the scenes in Red Alert where the spy gets executed and Tanya is taken captive etc, would it have made the game restricted to 18+? I think a 9/10 would have been a better score for Red Alert, and I guess you're comparing it to the PC version rather than games like Panzer General (ugh!) and the like. It would be wrong for me to call you stupid, as you're entitled to your opinion and probably have legitimate reasons for your 8/10, but - you're stupid.

- Michael Taylor

PS: Maybe stupid's a bit harsh.

Red Alert is a good game, but it is not without flaws. Still, we consider 8 out of 10 to be a good score for a game that was originally a PC title. In fact, almost all strategy games on the PSX are conversions of PC games, so it's a shame that there aren't many developed exclusively for the PlayStation. One such exception is Front Mission Alternative, which is featured in this issue and should be released worldwide if Square has any sense. Please don't call us stupid.

SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL

I really like your magazine and I'm delighted to hear that it will be monthly from now on. I wanted to add my two cents worth to the topic of the shaker feature for controllers. Like some of the Feedback writers from issue 7, I have used the N64 Rumble Pack, and it was certainly a lot of fun! But I somehow doubt that legal hassles are the reason Sony haven't released a shaking controller. A big point that every one seems to have missed is that the Rumble Pak is independent of the controller - it just slots in at the bottom of it. So if the controller was to wear out (and they all eventually do), there's no worries. You just pull out the pak and insert it into a new controller. Sony's shaker will be built into the pad itself, so they would want to make sure that the pad is very sturdy.

Also, I'm curious as to whether Max H was correct when he said that you have to be over 18 to buy games if they are rated R. I'm 14 and I have lots of M15 rated games, and no-one has stopped me from buying them. I always thought the rating was a guideline, not

Maaate, you forgot the SLR 5000!

STRATEGIC GODS

I consider myself a strategy game expert and thoroughly enjoyed Red Alert and Warcraft II. I have played all the strategy games on the PSX and I wonder why there aren't more. Reading



C&C: Red Alert. A good game, but flawed

the law. Could you please confirm this?

- Darren

Your view point on the shaking controller is very interesting indeed - nice idea. As to ratings, well it's true R rated games may only be purchased by people over 18. With rating like M15 you'll find that stores tend to be a little lax, but they still have the right not to sell you those goods. If you tried to buy a R18+ game you will not be in luck - unless you look so far over 18 that the sales assistants can't be bothered checking for ID!

ARRGGHHH!

Please help. I'm a monthly reader of your mag and, upon reading your review of Final Fantasy VII a couple of issues back, I went and bought it.

As you said in your review, I was a bit disappointed with the gameplay, as it's the first game of its style in my library, but within an hour of playing, I was hooked. After spending many sleepless nights to see what would happen next, I finally made it to the third disc.

One morning when I was keen to finish the game, I started the console and, to my great shock, no game started. I opened my PlayStation and my FFVII Disc 3 was not there. I checked my library to no avail. My wife swears she wouldn't touch it, so my conclusion came to my son who is only 14 months old, but already knows how to turn the PlayStation on and off and how to take the discs out.

Well, I turned the house upside down and inside out. I found things I didn't even know existed, but no disc. Could you please help me get information on how to I can get the third disc as I can't buy the whole game again and I'm desperate to finish!

- Harry Tzortzopolous

Strange happenings are afoot at the Tzortzopolous household! Ahhh, the Twilight Zone of PSX games! Don't worry Harry, we've all lost games that way. My only suggestion are that you either scour the second hand shops for a cheaper copy of the whole game, or alternately, rent the game and try to finish in one night (there isn't much left to do on disc 3, you can probably knock it over in a day or so.) Any suggestions from our legion of readers?



Got a burning question? Send it to:

**FEEDBACK Q&A
PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
78 REHWICK ST
REDFERN
NSW 2016**

e-mail: playstation@next.com.au

Got a burning question about something to do with the PlayStation? Want to know when the sequel to your favourite game is coming out? Do you lie awake wondering why we gave a certain game a particular score? Wonder no longer, simply send your queries to Feedback Q&A, and, if the answers exist, they will appear on these very pages!

Q Hello, just a few queries and some suggestions:

1. I, like most people, have this nasty human habit of judging people. Most of the time my judgements are wrong. So perhaps you would like to devote some pages of your magazine to helping my judging problems and give us some info... about your reviewers. I'm sure readers would like to know at what age Amos stopped believing in Santa Claus and whether any of you think it's dangerous to give Marilyn Manson millions of dollars. I'd love to know if Steve Polak has seen any Quentin Tarantino films, or if Adrian Bertram has been to an AA meeting. Or how about telling us if your editor is a member of the One Nation Party. You get the idea. A survey, but don't be boring and tell us your favourite food or your age. Give us some interesting facts.

2. On page 37 of issue 6 (the G-Police review) the picture in the top left corner, numbered 2, has two marks (**) next to the word 'mis-hyp'. Is this a cheat that gives you infinite ammo? Are there any cheats for G-Police?

3. Why did Amos' review of Ace Combat 2 say that there were only 11 planes? When I rented the game, I finished it and counted 14 planes in total. I started a new game and, much to my astonishment, I was presented with an option to play with "normal planes" or "extra planes". I then finished the game with the extra planes and counted an extra 5 or 6 on top of the original 14. One of the new planes looked a bit like an X-Wing and full rating for all attribute, except stability. Pardon my blasphemy, but I believe Amos has done a sub-standard review of this game and I think he deserves a severe slap on the wrist with a metal ruler. PLEASE DON'T DO IT AGAIN!! False information is very annoying!

4. Just wanted to suggest some zombie movies to put you in the mood for Resident Evil 2.

• Dawn of the Dead.

• Night of the Living Dead or really any other George Romero movie, except for Day of the Dead, which is really pathetic.

PS: Do the words The Zone mean anything to any of you?

- G. Vaillant

A 1. Whew, what a call! Where to begin? We haven't seen Steve Polak for a while, not since he wrestled control of a small cruising vessel from Wolf Interactive and headed for the open seas. We're still receiving his reviews by Morse code, though.

Amos Wong (who early-rising, Tick-watching readers may have seen raving on about anime on Cheez TV) only works for us every second day. The rest of the time he seems to run a shady second-hand abalone business that he insists is not a front for Patagonian counter-insurgents. Most people believe him.

Adrian Bertram has recently announced his decision to change his first name to Plastic. He describes himself as 5'10", with blonde hair, blue eyes and great pair of dancing feet.

Clyde E. Scope is not, as some people have cruelly suggested, a pseudonym. Clyde is the by-product of an embarrassing dalliance between a young Parisian noblewoman and a popular children's toy of the 1800s.

Hillous is a psychotic bike-riding freak from hell. He spends his days relaxing at the steel works.

Rosco P. Coltrane is here on a working visa from Texas. At least that's what's stamped on his passport.

Black Pig does not exist. If you think you have ever read something with that by-line on it, you are wrong. We know nothing of this person.

Andrew Iredale is not a member of One Nation, but you weren't far off! Iredale is in fact the pseudonym of Pierre McLoquez, the brutal Scottish Nationalist wanted by Interpol for the infamous Baby Eating incident on Saint Peter's day, 1994.

Nic Healey, is a retired old rocker who used to front a 60s rock group called "Ye ha Bubba, give that pig some lovin'".

2. Yes, it's a cheat for infinite weapons. During the weapons review, press Left + L2 + R1 + Circle all at the same time and you will hear a 'bang' sound effect.

3. Due to deadlines, our reviewers are sometimes unable to play games through from start to finish. Often there are time constraints, or they just don't get good enough at it to finish, or maybe even that they just don't like it. They are, after all, only human. (Well, mostly.)

4. Romero rules, yeah baby! We'd also include the first Evil Dead, just for the atmosphere

Q Hello! Your magazine is excellent! Reading the reviews is the next best

thing to playing the actual games. I'd like to say that FFVII is the best game I have come across so far. It is just addictive! I have two questions:

1. Is there any plans for FFVII 2?

2. How do you beat the Weapon that roams the ocean near Juno? I've tried so many combinations of characters, materia and limit breaks that I'm thinking it's unbeatable!

Thanks for your time.

PS. Tifa Lockheart would give Lara Croft a run for her money!

- Lab Jones

A 1. That'd be Final Fantasy 8, wouldn't it? Yes, they are working on it, but we probably won't hear much about it until it's fairly close to completion

2. If that Weapon is still underwater, DON'T TOUCH IT. You'll get a chance to show off your skill later, trust us



Dead or Alive, coming soon on the PSX

Q I read in a review in an enemy mag that there is a game called Monster Rancher on NTSC which is by Temco.

1. Do you know if it will be released on the PAL format? If so, will it be released in Australia?

2. How about the rumours of Tomb Raider the movie? I think Sandra Bullock would make a good Lara. What do you think?

3. The first issue I bought of this mag was issue 6. Would it be possible to get issues 1-5?

4. Have you done a review on Rayman Platinum? If not, could you please do one?

- Adam Kendrick

A 1. The only Temco game due to be released on the PlayStation in the near future is Dead or Alive.

2. We've yet to hear anything more on those rumours - our spies are searching as we speak though, so don't worry. As for Sandra Bullock - we personally think she shouldn't be allowed to stand near another camera for the rest of her life, but each to their own. Anyone else got a suggestion?

3. Inside DAPSM you should find an order form for back-issues - no hassles!

4. We reviewed Rayman Platinum in issue 5. It got 7 of 10

Q I have some enquiries about Resident Evil 2 and the demo of it. In

a another games mag, I read that if you own a Game Shark you can access new weapons, keys and rooms in the Resident Evil 2 demo, such as the new illegal shotgun, submachine gun and the S and L keys that you cannot otherwise get, so that you may open 2 new rooms containing information. What I'm wondering is if you can get these items in the full version (or Japanese version) and if the answer is no, why the hell not? Also, the magazine I read stated, and I quote: "This time around you'll find at least 10 new weapons, including a shotgun, double barrelled shotgun, an M16, a gatling gun and a flamethrower." Again, will these be available in the PAL version?

Why were the new cut scenes from the Directors Cut (featuring severed hands, decapitated heads and Chris sucking on a fag) cut from the game after it was announced that there would be "new cut scenes from the original Japanese version of Bio Hazard"? Has this got something to do with religion? Surely if the Japanese don't get offended by a man getting torn apart by a mutated rapid dog and a head rolling along the ground with brains coming out of its mouth, then why should we? Thankyou.

A The Game Shark is a device that lets you break into the code of the game and modify parameters such as energy levels, like the Action Replay cartridges that were available for the Megadrive and Super NES. Unfortunately it's not available in Australia as it has been designed for NTSC systems. Should a PAL version become available, we'll let you know. For now you'll just have to play your games the way the developers intended.

With the edited cuts scenes, it's like we said before - it's about what rating the game will get, not about a moral standpoint as such. Religion certainly has nothing to do with it. There are many, many religions in this country, all of which would have a different standpoint on the subject you have raised. However, the almighty dollar has far greater influence

Q A few questions:

1. Is Sony bringing out new consoles?

2. First there was 8 bit, then 16, then 32, then 64 and now my friend tells me that Sega has just brought out a 128 bit machine. Is this true?

3. If so, are Sony going to bring out a 256 bit console?

4. Pleasee will you bring out a demo of Discworld II: Missing presumed...?

5. Is Star Trek: Starfleet Academy coming out on the PlayStation?

6. Do you know what the next Oddworld is and when it's coming out?

Anyway, that's the end of my questions. ANSWER THEM!

- Adam Ghiggino



Starfleet Academy: Beaming Into PSX?

A 1. Sony are planning a PlayStation Mk.II that will probably be available around the turn of the century. No specs on it yet, though.

2. Sega has released specs for their mooted machine, but until you see it for sale in the shops...

3. Why? There's more to videogames than being able to boast the most number of bits!

4. We already have - last issue in fact. Hope you liked it!

5. It's been in the pipeline for quite a while, but there's still been no firm sighting of it.

6. Oddworld 2 will be called Abe's Exodus and is due to be released worldwide in September.

Q Hey guys, sick mag... any way I just have a few questions:

1. Can you like get a better background and/or better sound on your demos? 'Cause the "corn cobs" really started annoying me.

2. Also with demos can you put them in like a cardboard case? Because I know heaps of people have trouble with the paper cases.

3. Have you ever thought of giving out some stuff for your PlayStation? Like my friend - he has, like a 16x16cm yellow smiley face on the cd lid. Anyway thanks for printing/answering these questions, c-ya

- Matt Conroy

A 1. Corn cobs, hey? You got a problem with corn cobs? Are you talking to us? We don't see anyone else around here, so you must be...

2. The demo CD's will at some point start appearing in plastic cases. When? We don't know. I realise that people never like this reason, but the truth is that in the publishing business you have to deal with a fair amount of red tape. Plastic CD covers are coming. End of story.

3. Many Japanese games are released with cool sticker sets to plaster over your PlayStation, but sadly the American and European manufacturers don't seem to think it's worth the effort. Shame on you all!

Q 1. You said that Metal Gear Solid would be out in October. How can

that be? Metal Gear came out in other countries in January. I thought the release date was March/April?

2. When will Parasite Eve be coming out?

3. I heard that there was a game from Squaresoft called Soukaigi, made by the same people as Bushido Blade. It's meant to be the same type of game but with other things like magic etc. Overseas they said it would be released in early 1998. Have you heard any news for here?

4. I was wondering where you got the prizes for the Final Fantasy Goodies competition. I'd like to know if it's possible to buy the t-shirts and little figures of Cloud and stuff.

5. Will they ever do a sequel to Moto Racer?

- Lee Phillips

A 1. We don't know what version of Metal Gear Solid you're talking about, but the PlayStation game from Konami isn't due out in this country until October or thereabouts.

2. Still no news on this really cool looking RPG from Squaresoft's American development team, but we'll be the first to tell you if we hear otherwise.

3. Once again, this is another exciting title from Squaresoft that has only been seen in early form.

4. Sony had some promotional merchandise done up, but none of it was ever available commercially in this country. Importers have been bringing in some Japanese and American goodies, but you'll have to hunt around.

5. Moto Racer was quite successful on both the PC and PlayStation, so the chances of a sequel are fairly good.

Q Great job guys, keep it up! I'm just writing to say how much I enjoy reading your magazine. Compared to the American and British mags, yours kicks butt. To all the people who write in and complain about game scores and review, just chill out. Everyone is

an individual and we all have different tastes. Don't just rely on magazine reviews - go to a specialist dealers. They are mostly more than happy to let you try the game before you lay down your cash. Anyway, I would greatly appreciate your responses to the following:

1. Any news on Gran Turismo - release date, types of cars in the game, your impressions?

2. Any Jonah Lomu codes that you are aware of?

3. I have a great idea for a new section in your mag devoted to readers high scores, similar to the Wipeout 2097 competition in issue 1. It would be great to find out other peoples times for great games like V-Rally, Need for Speed, Street Racer, TOCA etc. I love these games but it would be great to compare my best efforts with other people.

- Keith Stevens

A 1. The current street date for GT is the second week of May. We've been thoroughly enjoying the Japanese version, however the PAL version is expected to contain almost twice the number of cars and the game will run up to 30% faster. It's going to be hot hot hot, and we'll have a massive review of it next month.

2. No codes we know of, but there are secret teams available if you win the championship.

3. Yes, excellent idea! Readers, start your engines and send us your best scores or lap times for your favourite games. If it's really hot, send us a photo of the screen for confirmation

Q I have been a dedicated PlayStation owner for nearly 2 years and I have 31 games. I've bought every issue of your magazine and I'm very happy to see that you're now monthly. I just wanted to say that the Net Yaroze games you've had on your demo discs sucked, but I think you should keep putting them on as



Gran Turismo is due for PAL release in May, with twice as many cars as NTSC. Wow

they're good to muck around on and you get the whole game for free!

A few questions:

1. When is WWF98 coming out? I have seen a lot of pictures of it and read lots of info about it on the net and I think it's shaping up to be a beast of a game.

2. Why don't game companies bring out add on CDs for PlayStation games, like extra levels for Duke Nukem, or extra tracks for Wipeout 2097 and extra characters for fighting games?



Wipeout 2097: an excellent game as is

3. Are the secret Ant Missions which are in the PC version of Red Alert in the PSX version?

4. I have read on a lot of web sites that there is a Toyota Celica hidden in V-Rally. I think the cheat is that you have to get first in every race in Arcade and Tournament mode on the hardest difficulty level and then get a time under one minute on the first track of the Arcade mode. After that the lane way on the left a little bit down from the start will open up and if you drive down it you will obtain the Celica. I've found this very hard to do - have you ever got it to work?

5. I think that you should have a part in your magazine where people send in their best times, highest scores, most wins in survival mode etc and you print them so people can try and beat them.

That's all for now. Thanks for your time and keep up the great work on the best PlayStation mag in the world.

- Nameless

A 1. WCW Vs the World is already out, and WCW Nitro is due out in a month or so, but we haven't heard of any WWF games. (Bring back Brutus the Barber Beefcake!)

2. It's a nice idea, but for the effort involved on behalf of the developers it's easier (and more profitable) to release a full game.

3. You've got us there - we honestly haven't played the game thoroughly enough to find them, but if any readers have discovered any cheats like this please let us know!

4. I don't know about the Celica, but the Japanese version has hidden F1 cars in it!

5. Have you and the previous reader been talking to each other about this? Wow, we might just have to bow down to popular opinion!



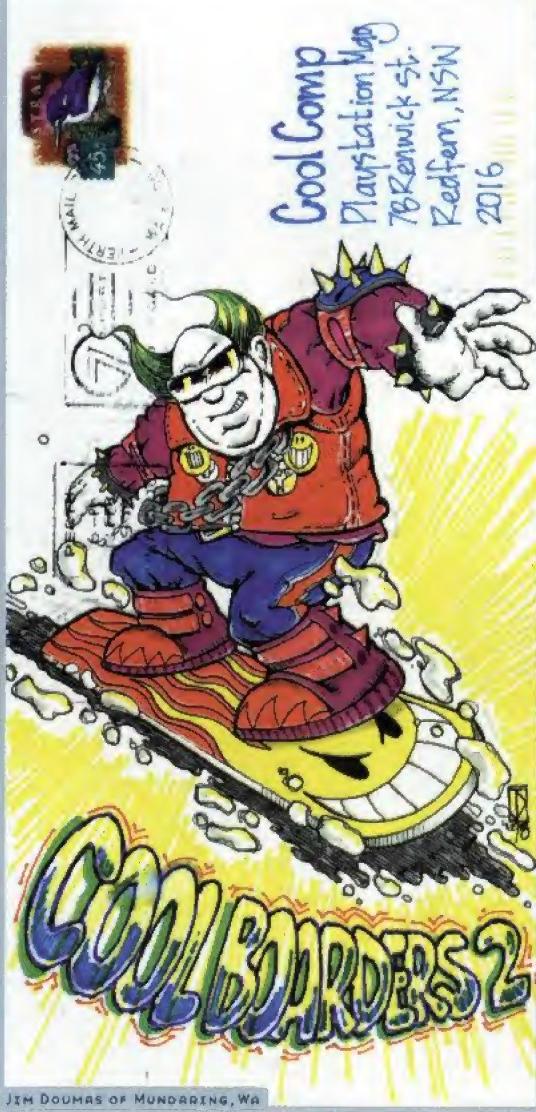
Cool Boarders 2

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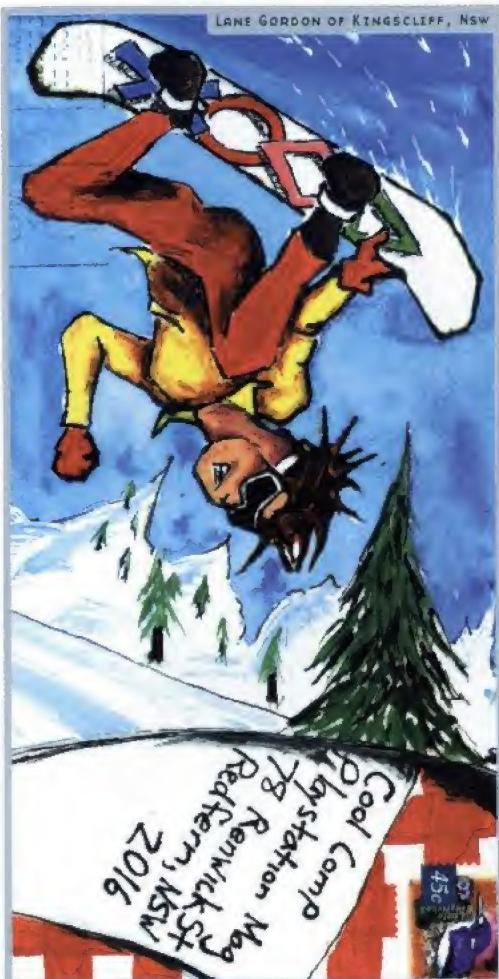
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Cool Boarders 2



MATT BLACKSHAW OF MIRANDA, NSW



LOOK WHAT CAME CRASHING THROUGH OUR LETTERBOX ONE DAY! THIS MARVELLOUS PAPIER MACHÉ MODEL OF CRASH BANDICOOT WAS SENT TO US BY MEGAN PERRY OF PORT MELBOURNE. CRASH NOW RESIDES ON OUR BOOKCASE AND CASTS A FIERCE GLARE IN OUR DIRECTION WHENEVER HE CATCHES US SLACKING OFF! THANKS MEGAN, KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR LETTERBOX FOR A SPECIAL PRIZE COMING SOON!

WE'VE ALSO GOT A LOAD OF VERY COOL ENTRYS FROM OUR COOL BOARDERS 2 COMPETITION RUN IN ISSUE #7. THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SENT A PICTURE IN, WE HAD A TOUGH TIME PICKING THE WINNERS FROM SUCH A HIGH NUMBER OF TOP QUALITY (AND OFTEN QUITE HUMOUROUS) ENTRIES



STUCK IN A GAME?

Having trouble getting through a game? Are you lost searching for the magic cucumber which opens up the next level? Or perhaps you have an excess of tips which you'd like to share with other readers? Miss Nurse has the tips at her finger tips.

WRITE TO:

HELPSTATION
PlayStation Magazine
78 Renwick St
Redfern, NSW 2016

**Porsche Challenge**

Sent in by Walter Gillmore

Enter these cheats on the main screen. If you do it correctly you'll hear someone burst into laughter.

FISH EYE LENS: Δ, □, O, L1, L2, R2, R1
INTERACTIVE TRACKS: Left + O, Down + Δ, Right + □



Porsche



Nightmare Creatures

INVISIBLE CAR: □ + O, L2 + R2, □ + O, L1 + R1, □ + O
MAD RACE: Up, Left, Right + Select
PLAYER CAR JUMPS: □, O, □
ALL CARS JUMP: Up + □, Up + O, Up + □, Up + O, Up + □, Up + O, Up + □
HIGH VOICES: Up, Δ, Up, Δ
UNLIMITED TRIES: L1 + L2, R1 + R2 + □
TEST DRIVER AVAILABLE: Right + □, Left + Select + O
TUNE TEST DRIVER: Left + O, Right + Select + □
HYPER CAR: Select + □, Select + O, Select + □ + O
MIRROR MODE: Left + O, Down + Δ, Right + □
INTERACTIVE TRACKS: Down + Start, Up + Start, Select, Start
LONG TRACKS: Up + Select, Down + Select, Start, Select



Nightmare Creatures

END GAME FMV: □, O, Left + Select, Right + Select



Level 14: O, Down, Δ, Up, O, Δ, O, □
Level 15: O, Left, Δ, Down, Δ, O, □, Up, □
Level 16: O, Right, Δ, □, Δ, O, Up, □
Level 17: X, Δ, Δ, □, Δ, X, Down, □
Level 18: X, O, Δ, □, Δ, □, Left, □
Level 19: X, X, Δ, Down, Δ, Down, □, Up
Level 20: X, □, Δ, □, Δ, Down, O, □

Snake Boss

When you enter the room with the fire breathing snake you will see five columns around the snake pool. Slash those columns with your sword or staff and knock them onto the snake. For best results, use L1 or R1 to move to the next column, then hack away. If you're quick enough, the snake won't get a chance to breathe fire.

After all of the columns fall, the fire will stop and the snake will start biting at you. Dodge him when he strikes by pressing L1 or R1. When he starts to swing around the pool, strike him in the head. Do this four or five times and he's dead!

Cool Boarders 2

Kinky Cheat sent in by Vaughn De Costa

Alternate Clothes for the Girls

At the main menu, highlight the snow boarding combined screen and press Down, R1, Up, R1, Down, R2, Up, R2, Up, Up, R1, Down, Down, R2. Irin should appear in a leather outfit and Cindy in school clothes.

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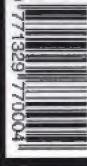
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Cool Boarders 2

Play as the Alien

To play as the Alien all you have to do is score a 38.0 or better in the halfpipe or complete all 100 moves in ONEMAKE jump.

Play as The Boss

To play as The Boss, complete Mirror mode in first place.

Play as the Snowman

To obtain the Snowman you must break all the records in FREERIDE mode.

Secret Levels and Secret Boards

To get all of the levels in Freestyle mode, just beat the Tour Competition in Mirror mode and come in first place. (This also lets you play as The Boss). To get the secret boards, choose a level which you can break the top record in any of the categories. Then choose the type of board you want to become a special board. (ie, if you want the Freestyle special, use a Freestyle board to break any top record.) Then all you have to do is set a new top record without falling and you will get the special version of the board you used.

Tricks

With practice you can perform over a dozen tricks in this game. Here's how to do a few of them:

SHIFTY - L1
LIEN AIR - down + R1
INDY GRAB - up + R2
FRONTSIDE 180 - Spin left
MUTE GRAB - up + R1
STALEFISH - down + R2
METHOD - down + L2
BACKSPIN 180 - Spin right
SHUFFLE - L1, L2
FAKIE TO SHIFTY - L1(before the jump), L1
FLIP - up + Flip
BACKFLIP - down + Flip
MISTY 180 - Hold X, Press down-left or down-right, release X
NOSE GRAB - up, up + R1
FRONTSIDE 180 SHIFTY - Spin left, L1

Star Wars:**Masters of Teras Käsi****Big Feet, Head, Hands, and Legs**

For big feet, hands, legs and head, hold

Down+X+Select while selecting your character. Don't release them until the fight begins.

Change Uniforms

Press L1 on the character select screen.

Clean Screen

To make the power bars and the force bars disappear, hold down L1 + R2 + Select while the match is loading.

Juggle Your Opponent

With Princess Leia, When you have a super gold power bar, throw your rising tracer out of the ring. Once you've done that, kick your opponent, and he will fly very high into the air. If you have done this correctly, you can juggle your opponent. There is a down side to this though, once you've thrown your tracer out of the ring, you cannot get any more power bars.

Level Select

To access level select on VS Mode, beat the game using Chewbacca.

Play as a Stormtrooper

Set the "Player Change at Continue" option to NO, then beat the game with Han Solo on the Jedi setting.

Play as Darth Vader

Set the "Player Change at Continue" option to NO, then beat the game with Luke Skywalker on the Jedi setting.

Fight Mara Jade

Play the game as DARTH VADER, and instead of a mirror match, you fight Mara Jade, a character who uses a blue lightsabre and fights like Darth Vader.

Play as Jodo Kast

Play the survival mode and beat all 10 fighters to unlock Jodo Kast.

Play as Mara Jade

Press and hold L1 + L2 + R1 when you enter the team battle mode. Be sure the setting is on Jedi and the character change at continue option should be off. If done correctly, the computer will automatically select fighters for you and the words "Fight for Mara Jade" should be seen on the screen. Beat the computer and she will be at your control.

Invisible Lightsabre

When you pick Luke or Mara Jade, throw the lightsabre with the super gold power bar. While the lightsabre is in the air, press R2 twice so you can see the handle on Luke or Mara's leg. When the lightsabre comes back it will be invisible unless you move or attack.

Play as Slave Leia

Set the "Player Change at Continue" option to NO, then beat the game with Princess Leia on the Jedi setting.

Speed Up the Credits

Whenever you view the game credits, hold down on the control pad. It will make the credits go faster. You can also press up on the control pad to go back through the previous credits.



Cool Boarders 2

Ace Combat 2**Bonus Aircraft**

Finish the game and see the Normal or Bonus Ending. A new option will appear after you've picked the difficulty under the "START GAME" option at the Title Screen. Using this option, you may have a chance to buy some new aircraft as you play through the game again. (Like the F-15S, MIG-31, Su-25, and the XFA-27)

Free Mission Mode

Using the "EXTRA" Aircraft Mode, finish the game and see the Normal or Bonus Ending. After the "START GAME" option at the Title Screen, the "FREE MISSION" option will appear. Now, you can play all the missions you have discovered so far.

How To See The Bad Ending

On the 19th mission, "Kingpin", be sure to shoot down the skilled enemy pilot, Z.O.E. You will then be able to play the 20th mission, "Last Resort". Do not shoot down the cruise missile that's launched to see this "Bad Ending".

How To See The Bonus Ending

On the 20th mission, "Last Resort", be sure to shoot down the cruise missile. You will then be able to play the 21st mission, "Fighter's Honour". Finish this mission to see this "Bonus Ending".

How To See The Normal Ending

Play the game up to the 19th mission, "Kingpin". Finish the mission

WITHOUT shooting down the skilled enemy pilot Z.O.E. (The enemy plane that is marked as 'DANGER' in the Briefing Screen.)

Music Player

Play the game and achieve a rank higher than First Lieutenant. A new option will then appear in the Options Menu. Inside, you may play all 28 music tracks from the game!

View The Aircraft In 3D

Remember all those Skilled Enemy Pilots that are marked as "DANGER!" on the Briefing Screen? If you manage to shoot every single one of them down and complete your collection of medals on the Statistics Screen, a new option will appear in the Options Menu. All the planes you have encountered so far (both yours and the enemies') may be now seen in 3D! You may rotate the cool planes around, and even zoom in and out!



Masters of Teräs Käsi



Masters of Teräs Käsi

M CONALO 128

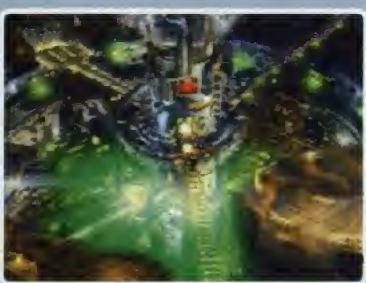
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Final Fantasy VII Station



Emerald Weapon

Having trouble beating Emerald Weapon? Just equip at least two of your party members with the mime command and have the other member equipped with the Knights of the Round summon as well as the W-Summon materia. Cast Knights of the Round twice and have the other two members of your party mime the attack.

When the rotation comes back around to the person without the mime command, DON'T ATTACK! Wait for one of the members with the mime command to come up again and have them use mime again. You can keep alternating back and forth between the two until Emerald Weapon is dead.

Also be sure to have one of your members equipped with the Final Attack + Revive materia combination. Emerald Weapon has 1,000,000 hit points, I've counted, and when it begins to run low it uses its special attack which takes off 9,999 from your entire party.

NOTE: IF ALL THREE OF YOUR MEMBERS HAVE THE MIME COMMAND THE FIGHT IS MUCH EASIER.

Huge Materia

To obtain the Huge Materia in Rocket Town, press O, □, X, X as the passcode.

There are four huge Materia that can reproduce other Materia if you can pass the requirements.

BLUE - You must have Bahamut and Bahamut Neo. Take these to Cosmo Canyon and talk to the Blue Huge

Materia and you will receive Bahamut Eishiki.

YELLOW - Have all 13 command materia at master level and then talk to the yellow huge Materia to receive the Master Command materia.

RED - Must have all 16 summoning materia at master level then talk to the red huge Materia to receive the Master Summoning materia.

GREEN - Have all 21 magic materia at master level then talk to the green huge Materia and you will receive the Master Magic materia.

Item Duplication

If you have the W-Item Materia, equip it and enter battle. Use the W-Item command and select your first item you want to use with the O button. Then choose your second item but do not use it. Select it so that cursors appear on the screen (either on your allies or your enemies) then cancel with the X button. Select again and make the cursor appear then cancel. Repeat the selecting and cancelling of the second item over and over. Each time you do this the quantity of the first item will increase by 1.



Kalm Traveller

There is a man in Kalm who will ask you to find three items for him. To find the item he asks for, go to the Cannon town aquarium and walk around in it until you fight a ghost ship. Morph it a few times to get one of the items. Return it to Kalm and you will receive the Underwater materia. Equip that then go cruise around in your sub until you find the Emerald Weapon. Kill it and return to Kalm for three master magic materia. Then take the air ship over to the Golden Saucer Desert and fly into the little red man walking in the desert.

You will fight Ruby, kill it and return the item to Kalm for a golden chocobo.

Morph Enemies Easily

For an easy way to morph enemies, have W-Magic Materia, Gravity Materia + "All" Materia, and Morph Materia. Have someone else cast Reflect on the party, then have the person with W-Magic use Demi 3 on your party twice. It will reflect and hit the enemy six times without killing it, but will greatly reduce its HP's. At this point, you can easily morph it.

Prevent Back Attacks

If your battle starts with a "Back Attack" hold L1 and R1 for a moment then release them. This will turn you around before your opponents get a shot.

Quad Magic Without a Chocobo

Use High Wind to go to Mideel. Go north, and you should find a little cliff (looks more like a staircase). On the edge, get on the higher side of the cliff and press X to go down, also pressing the square button and left. After a few tries, the high wind will stay on the cliff but the character will be on the lower side. Now you can walk to the materia cave on land, without a special chocobo.

outside the fence. He says he has misplaced his key and that it is probably back at the dig site he just left.

To find the key, go to Bone Village and tell the foreman you want to look for Normal Treasure. Place some of the workers up top in front of the tent and set off the blast. They will point to a spot on the ground, so have them dig there overnight.

In the morning open the treasure chest and you should have the Key to the Sector 5 Slums. Now go back to Midgar and go through the gate. Go back to Wall Market and go to the shop where the item machine was broken before (the one that shot at you), and try to use it now. You will receive Tifa's ultimate weapon.

Recover Missing Items

Did you miss something important? Fear not. Once you get to disc 3 you can recover anything by excavating for it in the Bone Village.



Racing Trophy

When racing S-class in the Gold Saucer, you will notice many keen items you

can't ever seem to get. Well you can get them all at once! Just win 15-20 races in a row! Ester will say "I've never seen anyone win so much in S class before!" She will then give you one of each item, including the coveted Cat's Bell! This trick only works once, though.

Re-enter Midgar

It is possible to get back into Midgar after you have left (not including by parachute.) On disc 3, go back to Midgar and talk to the man standing



Red Submarine

The first time you pilot a submarine, lose the battle and you will wind up on the shore near Cannon town. Head back into Cannon town and ride the elevator back inside the main complex. Make a left turn and go back to the sub docking area where you were before the sub battle. Two guards and a dog are blocking the pathway, kill the guards and talk to the dog. Follow it and you will find the Red Submarine.

Special Battle

To get to the URA battle (special battle) in the Battle Arena, first gain 64,000 battle points and buy the W-Summon materia. Next get 32,000 battle points and buy Cloud's level 4 limit, Omnislash. Equip Omnislash and talk to the lady at the counter in the battle arena. She will ask you if you want to participate in a special battle. Beat all 8 enemies and get the Final attack materia.

NOTE: YOU MUST HAVE YOUR ULTIMATE WEAPON EQUIPED TO FIGHT IN THE SPECIAL BATTLE.

Turtle Paradise Flyers

There are six flyers for Turtle Paradise hidden in this game. #1 is in Midgar by Aeris's house, #2 is in the Shinra building, #3 Ghost Square, #4 Cosmo Canyon, #5 Cosmo Canyon Hotel, #6 Yuffie's house.

When you have all those flyers go



Underwater Plane Crash

If you wander around in the submarine you'll eventually find a downed plane. Ram it with your sub to board it. Inside you'll find powerful materia, items, weapons, and a lot of Turks and monsters.

Unlimited Sources

To get unlimited Sources (luck source, magic source, etc.) perform the following actions. Get in the submarine and go to the downed plane. Wander around until you get into a battle and use the morph command on the enemies. The best way to do this is attack the enemies until they are almost dead and then use morph. In this area there are six different enemies and each one morphs into one of the six sources.

Virtual Immortality

Connect the Phoenix Summon and Final Attack materia in any linked slot. When your party dies, their Hitpoints will be completely restored. This makes killing Ruby, Emerald, and Sephiroth simple, just make sure you have enough Mindpoints to use the Phoenix Summon.

For more punch, add a Final Attack/Knight of the Round Table to the same weapon. Then when you die you'll resurrect and hit back HARD.

Recruiting Vincent

In the Shinra mansion at Nibelheim, there is a safe on

the top floor. The combination is: Right to 36, Left to 10, Right to 59 then Right to 97. Make sure you don't go too far left or too far right when turning. When it opens, kill the monster then get the stuff in the safe. Descent the spiral staircase and into the coffin room. Vincent is in one of the coffins. Talk to him, leave, then come back and talk to him and he will join you.

Recruit Yuffie

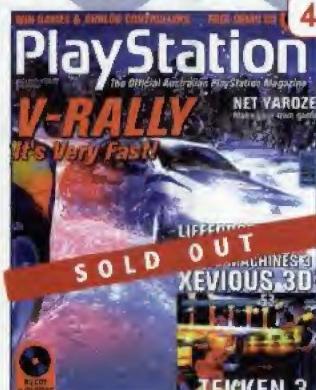
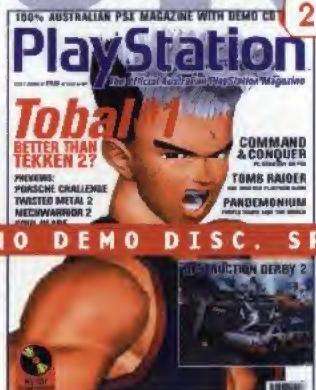
Near the exploded Mako site there is a small forest. Wander around in it until you fight a ninja woman. After you defeat her there will be a save point. DO NOT USE THIS or she will run away. Talk to her and tell her you don't want to fight her again. Then tell her you're terrified of her. When she asks if you need her help, say "Yes" then tell her that you're leaving and don't ask for her name.

Alternatively, try this. Equip the Enemy Away Materia which can be won in the Gold Saucer Chocobo Racing and a Luck Plus Materia. Go into any forests and wait for a while. Note that the Enemy Away Materia must be at Master Level for a higher percentage of chances to encounter Yuffie.

artwork by melanie elms



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